JOHN BULL

VOL. LXXIV. 1957

3D EVERY THURSDAY

POST WAR FOOD RIDDLE
By The EDITOR

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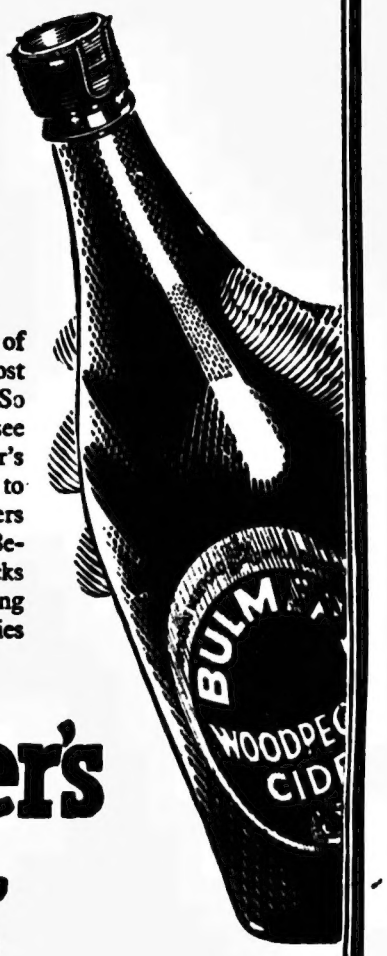

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FOOD FACTS

More about the new SALT FISH

The next time you visit the fishmonger's ask for some of the Salt Fish at 10d. a lb. which Canada and Newfoundland are sending us this winter to make up for the shortage of other fish. **You will find it cheap and a change, and it will repay you for extra care in the cooking.** This fish is heavily salted to keep it in condition during its long journey, so it must be soaked in water for about 24 hours before using. Ask your fishmonger how long he has soaked the fish. If he says less than 24 hours, finish the soaking at home. Once the salt is out, cook it the same day. Here is another recipe for making new and nourishing dishes from Salt Fish:

HOW TO SOAK

If the fish has not been soaked at all, soak it in plenty of cold water, skin side up, for 24 hours. If possible, change the water once or twice during soaking.

HOW TO BOIL

Drain from the soaking water and rinse the fish under the cold tap. Cut in convenient pieces; put in a pan with cold water to cover and bring slowly to the boil. Cook until tender, about ten minutes. Drain well and use as required.

LISTEN TO THE KITCHEN FRONT FROM TUESDAY TO FRIDAY at 8.15 a.m.

COD PANCAKES

Ingredients: ½ lb. soaked salt cod; 1 level tablespoon chopped parsley; salt and pepper; 2 level tablespoons mixed herbs; 6 oz. mashed carrots. *Batter:* 4 oz. flour; 1 level tablespoon Dried Egg (dry); 2 level teaspoons baking powder; salt; ¼ pint water. *Quantity:* 4 helpings.

Method: Cook the cod in water until it flakes easily. Remove bones and flake in small pieces. Make the batter by mixing together all the dry ingredients, adding sufficient water to make a stiff batter. Beat well and add the remainder of the water. Add to the batter the flaked cod, parsley, seasoning, herbs and carrots. Melt some fat in a pan and when smoking hot drop in large spoonfuls of the mixture. Brown the pancakes on one side and then turn over and brown the other.

THE MINISTRY OF FOOD, LONDON, W.1. FOOD FACTS No. 179

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JOHN BULL

Thursday, for week ending Saturday, December 18, 1943, 93, Long Acre, W.C.2. Telephone: Temple Bar 2468

"Come the three corners of the world in arms,
And we shall shock them; naught shall make us rue
If England to itself do rest but true."

MEAN MINDS

● We have a confession to make. We thought the Ministry of Pensions had turned over a new and fairer leaf. And we have been proved wrong.

It was decided last August that when a man is so seriously disabled by war injuries as to be unemployable, he should receive a supplement of 10s. a week to his pension.

One of our readers, receiving 100 per cent. pension, applied for this supplement.

After poring over his application for four months the Ministry has thought of an excuse for saying "No."

The excuse is that, though he is too unfit to work now, his condition will probably improve so that he'll be able to look for a job some time in the future!

Yet an official White Paper has stated that "in the rare case where the man again becomes employable, eligibility for the special payments made to him as an unemployable man will cease."

So the Ministry is well protected. Why, then, does it jib at paying the supplement to our reader *until* he is fit to take a job?

Presumably because it is still mean-minded.

Straight from the Shoulder

CLIMAX IN SIGHT

EVERYTHING, as General Smuts has said, "is going O.K."

The end of the war is being shaped; the grand, grim climax is within sight; we are about to pass through the most dramatic and decisive phase in the history of man.

Turkey's Part

Our task will be gigantic and may be costly. But it should be lightened by the events of the past few days, and the importance of Turkey's attitude cannot be stressed too highly.

From her air bases the oilfields of Rumania are within range of heavy bombers—and fighter cover assured to the islands of Cos, Leros and Samos which the German dive-bombers wrested from our grip.

Dardanelles Again

And by controlling the Aegean islands we could open the Dardanelles to Allied shipping. Thus could we operate a joint strategy with Russia in the Black Sea; the Balkan States would be open to attack from three sides.

"Should the Dardanelles fall, the world war would be decided against us," wrote Von Tirpitz to his Kaiser. His comment would be equally pertinent to-day.

Watch Rommel

That is why the enemy has rushed forces to the Turk frontier. His move may not be bluff; he may try to strike first to catch us on the wrong foot.

But this time, there is reason to think, he could not succeed. Plans are ready to deal with such a contingency—and Bulgaria's effort to drop out of the war confronts him with a tremendous complication.

Attack on Tito

In the North Balkans, meanwhile, he has opened a heavy counter-offensive against the Serb guerillas commanded by the blacksmith general, Tito.

At all costs the enemy must try to liquidate this menace to his flank before the main Allied attack develops. But, though the fighting is fierce, he is not making much headway.

Last week, young King Peter also attacked Tito—for daring to set up a new and comprehensive Yugoslav Government. He gained no support from the British.

Change of Policy

Indeed, though military necessities remain unchanged, our political policy towards the Balkans has been profoundly modified.

The exiled monarchs and governments of Greece and Yugoslavia have shown up badly compared with their peoples at home. And our military chiefs are at last favouring the fighters against the intriguing politicians.

We shall see a similar revision of ideas about many prominent European figures before this war is over!

Western Front

As for Western Europe, our preparations to invade should now be almost complete.

It will be an attack not only of prodigious size but terrible intensity. It will engage not only our most seasoned fighters but the great bulk of the Anglo-American armies.

Millions of men; great armadas of ships; air fleets of unprecedented size—all will be thrown in.

Counter-Attack?

We must expect the enemy to strike back.

He cannot hope to invade Britain now. Not even if we send every soldier abroad and entrust our defence wholly to the Home Guard.

But he has the strength to launch a powerful airborne "diversion" in an attempt to make us whittle down our blows abroad because of dislocation at home.

In Reserve

Significantly, the 250,000 troops that Germany is keeping in reserve at Jutland includes her best airborne divisions.

But we have reason to suppose that the worst she could do would not cause us to swop horses in mid-Channel. Our leaders' plans will be carried out.

New Weapon?

Nor need we doubt that detailed measures could be put into operation at very short notice against the worst the enemy might do—whether it takes the form of air attack or some "secret," new-type artillery.

We may run into storms. But we shall not be submerged by them.

The Last Ditch

Russia, too, is ready. Are the Germans as prepared for the icy rigours of the Eastern Front? Probably not, but at least they have the consolation of knowing that this will be their last winter campaign.

Last summer, JOHN BULL predicted that there would be no break between Stalin's autumn and winter offensives. As confidently, we now say that he will use *all* his reserves in a final triumphant offensive to coincide with the Anglo-American invasion of Europe.

"YOUR GENEROSITY IS OVERWHELMING"—

writes Mrs. H. Bowen, of Bartholomew Road, London, N.W.5, in acknowledging cheque paid under our Free Insurance.

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Readers not yet registered can obtain Registration Forms from "John Bull's" Insurance Department, 128, Long Acre, London, W.C.2.

Trouble at Home

In Germany, newspapers and radio speakers show increasing nervousness about civilian morale, the spate of rumours, and a tendency to listen to British "propaganda."

One Berlin broadcaster has let slip a remark that some Germans "could not be granted even the right of existence. They were a disturbance to the home front; therefore their heads had to fall."

Perhaps Herr Himmler's head is no longer quite secure upon his shoulders.

Tongue-Wagging

There are clouds even over the land of the Rising Sun. Tojo has just told a conference of police officials that Japan's most important need is control of speech and prevention of any split in national opinion.

But Japan must look far beyond her home shores. Thousands of miles to the south-west we are about to attack the Marshall Islands. And this tough job will be the prelude to far more ambitious operations nearer to Japan itself.

For Their Relief

We, too, must look ahead; we must calculate and scheme and amass stocks for the enslaved peoples whose freedom we shall restore next year.

Food will have to be shipped to them. Clothes must be ready for them. And also, as an immediate necessity, the means by which they will be able to regain their liberty of thought—newspapers and wireless sets.

Are these being prepared?

Still Unready

But this poses a larger question: Are we in Britain ready to engage in the staggering tasks that peace will bring to our own country?

Last week, an official answer was given. And a highly unsatisfactory one it was!

It proved that the Government is a second Ethelred the Unready, limping towards Reconstruction as unsteadily as a lame tortoise.

Lord Woolton

Now, the Minister of Reconstruction cannot be blamed for that. Lord Woolton took over the job only three weeks ago.

Clearly, it is not his fault that the Uthwatt Report has been accumulating dust for more than sixteen months, the Barlow Report boycotted for four years, the Scott Report pigeon-holed for a year, and the Beveridge Report woefully adulterated by the grandmotherly old gentlemen of Whitehall.

Caution

Lord Woolton, indeed, was wise to be modest and cautious in his promises.

But he could not disguise how little had been done by his colleagues towards planning for peace.

Getting Restive

In the Commons, it was significant that hardly a Conservative pooh-poohed Labour's Amendment on the Address.

Our legislators in both Houses made plain their disappointment with the Government's painful progress on the vast issues of Planning for Plenty.

Wits and Wealth

Sir George Schuster, who is no firebrand, rightly emphasised that post-war Britain would have to live on its wits and its' work instead of relying on accumulated wealth. He went on to say that the Government should be working on bold plans.

That, indeed, is common-sense. We have shown that we can use our wits and work like fury in war.

But if we are to keep our people at work after the war we must use our wits now to replan our industries, the rebuilding of our towns, and the improving of our social services.

Promise—Performance

The good intentions of the Government are not disputed. We have been promised food, work and homes by the Prime Minister; the trouble is simply that there is likely to be a disastrous lag between promise and performance *unless* definite proposals are drawn up without delay.

And, we might add, unless social reforms are also forthcoming. For the people will demand something more than bread and shelter when they have won the greatest war in history.

On the March

To end this page as it begun, with the remark of a wise old statesman-soldier: "There is a new spirit in England." Indeed, as Smuts went on to say, "The old order into which I was born lies buried in the Western Desert. The world is on the move."

It will be an out-moded Government that fails to keep pace with the millions who are marching forward into the Century of the Common Man!

(Continued overleaf)

STRAIGHT FROM THE SHOULDER

CONTINUED FROM PRECEDING PAGE

THE Minister of Labour and National Service might well hate this page—if he were not a public servant who's shown he relishes fair criticism.

We've had a lot to complain about in the working of the call-up at the employment exchanges. But this time we'd like to praise Mr. Bevin.

Excellent Plans

We'd like to say that the measures he's planning for the reinstatement of Service men and women when they leave the Forces sound excellent.

Where substitutes have taken over a job the original holder is to be reinstated. And it isn't going to be possible for employers to sack reinstated men for a fixed period after they've got back their jobs.

He's Busy

Apart from these measures—of which public hints have already been given—we know that Mr. Bevin is planning others just as reasonable. All power to his elbow—a brawny one at that.

Still, these plans are for the future. And we shall have no future unless we keep pegging away at the present....

Tale of a Kettle

The A.R.P. Controller of N.A.A.F.I. has just been having some wise things to say about the shortcomings of the Ministry of Home Security.

He points his argument with the story of an electric kettle.

This kettle was wanted by a casualty service officer in the Midlands for a first-aid post in a big public shelter.

To and Fro

He saw just the right sort of kettle, but it could not be bought without a permit. The Ministry of Health passed the matter on to the Ministry of Supply to decide. The M. of S. decided that shelters came under Home Security and they should settle the problem.

The Ministry of Home Security put the responsibility back on the Ministry of Health.

Big Substitute

By this time the casualty service officer was angry. A 'phone call to the Ministry of Health brought some satisfaction. But not much.

An electric kettle was out of the question, but through the kindness of the General Officer Commanding Western Command arrangements were being made for the supply of AN ARMY MOBILE FIELD KITCHEN.

"Half-Baked"

"It seems," says Mr. H. Powell, who told the story at an Institute of Civil Defence meeting, "that it's not only local authorities and A.R.P. officers who do not know where they stand."

And he referred to the "half-baked" directions issued by the Ministry of Home Security, which were interpreted "according to the inclinations of the local Pooh-bahs."

Quiet Watch

Which reminds us of some quaint instructions to the wardens at a post in East London. In future, the night duty men are to take turns in watching for flares, listening for gunfire, and noting the fall of bombs *when there is no alert.*

This means that part-time wardens, instead of sleeping during raid-free nights, must do nearly three unnecessary hours on watch.

Unexplained

The instructions are said to come from Regional Headquarters.

They do not explain why the police, N.F.S. or control staff, who have to be awake anyway, cannot keep a look-out for raids that beat the sirens.

Nor do they explain how the procedure fits in with Mr. Morrison's recent promise that hours of duty are to be reduced wherever possible for part-time Civil Defence workers.

A Good Turn—

An American officer—a Fortress pilot—showed a fine disregard for Home Security rules the other night.

Chatting with a shop assistant, he heard she had to fire-watch in the Holborn area despite a heavy cold. She couldn't get out of it unless she provided a substitute.

"I'll be your stand-in," said the American. And he was, though the authorities were not quite sure they ought to employ a "foreigner."

—And a Bad

We hear of many little acts of kindness like that. It's a poor return to rob our visitors: many of them *are* being robbed.

Two American soldiers with two girls were in a West End bar last Monday night. They ordered advocaat and were charged 5s. for a tiny glass.

It was wartime advocaat, and the price to publicans is 11s. 9d. a bottle. Up to thirty glasses come from a bottle—£7 10s. for 11s. 9d.

A Brave Woman

When Mrs. Bertha Rees was sued at Uxbridge last June for non-payment of instalments on her furniture, she said she was keeping herself and two baby boys on £2 16s. a week. She wanted to keep her home together till her husband came back from the Middle East.

Judge Tudor Rees, reducing the instalments, said she was a very brave woman.

Please Copy

Lots of other people thought so, too, and they sent her money—about £25 altogether. Out of that Mrs. Rees paid two years' instalments on her furniture.

That did not satisfy the furniture firm; last week they sued for more of the £25. Thank goodness they didn't get it.

Our courts of law are constantly showing how it's possible to keep to the rules and common-sense at the same time. Government Departments, please copy.

Wise Fuel Move

The Minister of Fuel and Power has reduced the minimum electricity charges to consumers from 25s. to 10s. a year. Good for him. JOHN BULL has been recommending the move for months.

It will cost the companies about £60,000—which is unimportant. It will do away with what Major Lloyd George admitted was "a deterrent to fuel economy"—which is very important.

Helping the Enemy

The Minister might well turn his attention for a few minutes one morning to the complaint of residents in a Midlands village.

We cannot give its name because coal is allowed to burn there during blackout hours and the information might help enemy pilots.

Dangerous Beacon

The villagers are not very pleased to see such a dangerous beacon near their homes. They are prosecuted if they go on to the outcast site. There are no arrangements for the fires to be put out each night by fire-watchers.

And what annoys them on top of it all is that they're so constantly reminded that every scrap of fuel must be saved.

Detour

One more point for Major Lloyd George this week. Will he be so kind as to ask the local authorities why buses are driven into Coventry from garages miles away in order to pick up Home Guards and convey them to different parts of the city?

An Inspector of the Coventry Corporation bus service could not understand it when he was asked the other day. We certainly can't.

Bureacrats at Work

A Kent reader has sent us a choice example of bureaucracy at work—the sort of example that would be funny if it weren't so pathetic.

For 'more than fifteen years the Sanitary Inspector of a town on the south coast has been responsible for putting into effect the Rats and Mice (Destruction) Act, 1919—in other words he's got on with the job of keeping down vermin.

Pestering

Now, with wartime red tape coming into its own, he's found many others ready to interfere. He's had calls from three Pest Officers stationed in the county area and from the Divisional Rodent Inspector.

The Ministry of Works have taken a hand as well. What is more, they offer to disinfect rooms after infectious diseases. All part of the service.

In Duplicate

But, as the Sanitary Inspector mildly points out, all the Government visitors seem to do is to put people in touch with him. Often he's already attended to a complaint that's reported again.

The overlapping is a terrible waste of time. And, incidentally, the disinfection of rooms is a matter for the Health Authorities not the Ministry of Works. Curiouser and curiouser.

Worried, Bed-Less

It's time the Services did something about finding accommodation for relatives who are summoned to Scotland to see men in military hospitals.

Lately there have been scores of cases of parents or wives who have received urgent calls to the north and have found it impossible to get anywhere to sleep.

Lived in Outhouse

A Glasgow mother and father were summoned to the bedside of their airman son who was dangerously ill in hospital. Even the police could not find them proper accommodation and for eight days, while their boy was between life and death, they had to live in the outhouse of a farm.

Rooms should be put aside at all military hospitals for parents who sometimes travel hundreds of miles to see their sons.

Without a Job—

Two notes sent into JOHN BULL this week ought to appear together.

One is from an ex-soldier discharged on medical grounds. He has a pension of 8s. a week, is trained as a clerk and can now do light work. But he cannot get it. He's just been turned down for a job on the railway. Yet advertisements show that girls are being absorbed for the work.

—And With One

The other note is from an employee at a big engineering works in the North Midlands. He says he and his mates are complaining of boredom because they haven't enough to do to pass the time.

The management do their best to find work. Lately they set a lusty youth in his twenties on to the job of painting one side of a door. The other side was tackled by an overalled young girl.

★ **LADY ASTOR,** ★

the Conservative member for Sutton, Plymouth, is very pleased with the sound of her own voice—not an uncommon failing among our elected representatives, but one which most M.P.s take some pains to control. Her monotonous interruptions about teetotalism are accepted by the Commons as a rather worn-out joke, but last week she tested the patience of the House with odd remarks on a wider scale.

We understand the indignation of Mr. Shinwell, who thought she ought to be thrown out. The cut-and-thrust of democratic debate does not justify a womanly right to have the last word in the middle of every speech.

BEHIND THE NEWS

- **General alert orders have been issued to all Germans in Rumania by Killinger, Hitler's special ambassador in the country. Fear of Black Sea invasion is haunting the Nazi and Rumanian Quisling authorities.**
- *Big new drive to induce German women to join fire-fighting and other German emergency services is proving a failure. Reading between the lines in the Nazi newspapers shows sternest threats are useless.*
- **Mail services to German fighting soldiers have been severely restricted. Too many letters have been giving too complete a picture of the air raid damage at home.**
- **Luftwaffe Marshal Richthofen, recently recalled from Italy to Germany, is expected to be appointed Chief of the new S.S. Black Guard air force to be used inside Germany in case of revolt.**

WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOUR

By THE EDITOR

POST-WAR FOOD RIDDLE

FOR mankind to be well fed after the war, the world's agricultural production will have to be doubled.

This startling conclusion was reached by experts of the United Nations at the Hot Springs Conference.

It emphasises the vital importance to this country of a bold land and food policy.

But the Government has announced no comprehensive plan for agriculture and nutrition.

It is trying to solve an immense national—and, indeed, international—problem as though it were a jig-saw puzzle.

It is fiddling with little pieces and seeking to fit them into a picture not clearly seen as a whole.

Labour has approached the same problem with greater courage and realism. The policy it has put forward in its newly issued pamphlet, "Our Land," has JOHN BULL's general approval.

This policy involves the public ownership and control of all farm lands.

"Nationalisation" is a word of which many people are afraid. But we should only be afraid of words when they are used to obscure facts.

And it is a fact that no country can get the best yield from its own soil without a large measure of State control.

The Scott, Barlow and Uthwatt Reports would, if they were adopted, give the Government greatly increased power to acquire land at a fair price, and to utilise it for the benefit of the community.

These reports have been under consideration for many, many months and may be partially implemented during this session.

But, even if they were adopted in full—and they certainly will not be—they would be no substitute for a truly national land and food policy; they would simply make such a policy easier to frame and carry through.

Britain's agriculture needs to be put on an organised and sure basis is a demand which was powerfully urged in the House of Lords' debate last week on reconstruction.

Nations as well as armies march on their stomachs, and the paramount duty of any responsible Government is to keep the people properly fed.

This means planned agriculture. It means not only maximum yield, but maximum yield of *the right kind of food.*

As Sir John Orr has revealed, half of our own people were ill-fed or under-nourished all through the hungry "Twenties." In spite of free meals and free milk for schoolchildren—a reform which *must* be made permanent and further developed—under-nourishment will continue to be widespread if we do not take effective means to end it.

Mere bulk of food is not enough. Millions of men and women and children can be half-starved even when cereal crops are good.

SUCH protective foods as vegetables, fruit, meat and dairy produce are essential to a balanced and healthy diet, and there will never be enough of these without national—and international—planning.

All this also implies the need for a policy for the *financing* of agriculture and, in our own case, for adequate control of the food-importing trades in order that food of the right kind shall be available at reasonable prices.

And it is highly doubtful whether such a policy can ever become effective without some degree of "nationalisation."

Obviously, in these small and crowded islands we shall never be able to produce all the food we need. To some extent at least we shall always be dependent upon help from abroad.

But here the whole international problem of nutrition has been clarified at Hot Springs. Its solution will depend upon the continued unity and genuine good will of all the United Nations.

And also upon their determination to increase the purchasing power of the masses in every country, particularly those which are called "backward."

"The coolie level" of wages and the "handful of rice" subsistence standards will have to be abolished before even the world's most "forward" countries can hope to enjoy an era of real plenty.

That is why JOHN BULL supports a policy of expansion based upon a deliberate improvement of wages, together with price control and a general overhaul of the distributive system.

But these world issues are beyond the scope of our immediate subject—the wisest use of our own natural resources.

The Labour Party proposes a General Enabling Act under which the State would be empowered to acquire all agricultural land on an agreed basis of compensation.

It is contended that this could be done without much difficulty by taking the five-yearly valuation of land, which is made for income tax purposes, and computing fair compensation therefrom.

Under such an Act, the Government would notify owners of the dates at which it would take over possession and would give them in return special land stock bearing a fixed rate of interest and redeemable after a given period.

No competent farmer or owner-farmer would be given notice to quit. On the contrary, there would be greater security of tenure for good farmers than private ownership has ever afforded.

Moreover, under this scheme a National Land Commission would be set up empowered to issue Development Bonds at a low rate of interest, and to use the money thus raised to make loans to farmers in need of them and to supply equipment in approved cases.

The change-over from private to national ownership would have to take place by degrees. But we agree with Labour that the State should be empowered to act at once in cases where the existing owners or tenants did not or would not farm their land to the best advantage.

The machinery for this extended control is already in existence and working smoothly under war conditions.

We refer, of course, to the County Executive Agricultural Committees, and it is proposed that they should continue to fix the standard of cultivation of farms in their own areas.

THEY would work under the general guidance of a National Land Commission, appointed by the Ministry of Agriculture to set an agricultural target for the country as a whole, but they would be left to develop the resources of their own districts

We are uncompromisingly opposed to control for control's sake, but the Labour Party is not asking for anything of the sort.

It takes the simple and reasonable attitude that every man who farms the land should regard himself as a trustee of the people's food supply.

Together with this basic plan for the State's gradual acquisition of all farm lands, it would, of course, be necessary to bring agricultural wages up to the level of those which prevail in other skilled trades.

This could be done through the National Wages Board, which would have to be given full authority.

Scarcely less important would be the provision of decent homes for the workers at reasonable rentals, of schools for their children, and adequate gas, electricity and water supplies in every rural area.

Labour may not have put forward a complete solution to the dual problem of land and food.

But it has at least formulated a bold and realistic policy calculated to keep this country well fed when peace comes.

And we shall do our utmost to support this policy unless and until the Government of the day should come forward with a better one and be prepared to carry it into immediate effect.

No Time for Simplicity

ARGUE IT OUT

★

By PALLAS

I DON'T know, nor do I greatly care, how many millions of words have been printed and spoken about the world we want, or imagine we want, after the war.

Most of the men and women who are fighting now for the things that matter to them emphasise in this connection their desire for decent homes and gardens, good kitchens and bathrooms; wages worth working for, some security in old age and a certain amount of culture, of entertainment and of leisure.

★ ★ ★

Simple enough, these desires, but like many simple ambitions not easy to attain when the decent homes have yet to be built, the living wages and work to be assured and time to relax free from economic worry to be guaranteed.

The wastage of history's most ruinous war will have a bearing on our lives for years to come.

Because of that wastage and the consequent demand for, and scarcity of, essential commodities, the world after the war will be in many respects a much simpler affair.

That is the opinion of Sir Ambrose Fleming, the famous scientist, who invented the thermionic valve which made possible radiolocation and radio-telephony.

At the age of ninety-four Sir Ambrose is tackling the problems of finding substitutes for the raw materials which the nations have expended so lavishly in the prosecution of war.

Until those substitutes are found and provided in ample quantities—experts estimate, for instance, that U.S. petrol supplies will last only 14 more years—we shall have to lead a simpler existence. "In many ways," says Sir Andrew, "that may not be a bad thing."

★ ★ ★

These are big issues. Do, then, the motor car or the aeroplane, natural rubber or rich food, luxury clothes or expensive gadgets, make life less simple?

If the so-called "blessings" of civilisation in the wider, scientific term were denied us, should our lives be lacking in certain essentials to life?

I doubt it. Life cannot be discussed in terms of simplicity or otherwise. The "simple" life in a country cottage might develop into one of extraordinary complexity, disturbing emotional depths never plumbed by life in a mansion.

★ ★ ★

Life with its currents of love and hatred, passion and apathy, ignorance and folly, splendour and squalor, is not, cannot ever be, simple.

Possession of money, of leisure, of material ease may influence but not still the emotions.

Undoubtedly life will not be so easy in the immediate years to come. It certainly will not be simpler

The world *en masse* will be more riddled than ever with far-reaching problems of every kind.

They will keep all creative and constructive men busy; and they will bewilder us all with the suddenness of their coming and the peril of their consequences.

As for simplicity . . . well, show me where to find it.

A Thousand Miles to Freedom

★ ***The Censor took two years to pass this story! Now, at last, it may be told, although some paragraphs have had to be deleted and names altered for security reasons.***

This amazing tale of a common soldier who cut his way out of enemy territory and walked a thousand miles to get home will rank among the most exciting escape stories of all time.

That his adventures took place at the beginning of the war does not date them. And they will continue, twenty years hence, to thrill all men and women who love true stories of valour and dogged endurance.

THE grinning Guardsman came out of his C.O.'s office and said: "I've got it."

"You've got what?"

"A long week-end leave."

"What did the Old Feller say?"

"Just 'granted.'"

"That all?"

"Oh, and he said: 'You have been awarded the Military Medal.'"

"What for?"

"I didn't like to ask."

"They'll march you out and ruddywell pin it on you in public."

"I'd rather they sent it by post," said the grinning Guardsman, and went back to duty.

He was Guardsman A. A.

World's Brave Heroes

Perhaps you saw A. A. (I may not yet tell you his full name) doing a Palace guard before the war.

The top of his bearskin, groomed like a film star's hair, stood 7 ft. from the ground. He stood rigid; about turned, stamping like clockwork with his iron heels. His scarlet tunic was spotless. A hundred hours of work had gone to make the shine on his boots and he had preserved the crease of his trousers as a dearer thing than life.

There he marched, his left arm bent like an angle-iron, so that you could have measured the degree of his "slope" with a protractor, and found it neither more nor less than exactly correct.

He was a very decorative soldier—something of a showpiece, regarded by the ignorant as, perhaps, a little too pretty to be useful. The outside observer tends to see only the outside of things.

When the war came, the scarlet tunics of the Guards went back to the stores. They kept nothing but a pernickety habit of creasing their battle-dress slacks to razor-edges, and boning a patent-leather shine out of their greasy ammunition boots.

Long, lean, immaculate, tough old grumblers and grousers of the Peace Time Army, the Guards went out in the shambles of France, shaven, polished, cleaned and pressed, holding together like the links of an anchor-chain, and fighting and dying with the pinched-in calm of men on parade, holding the battered little British line.

After Ten Months

In the chaos and the shame of the Belgian capitulation, Guardsman A. A. disappeared.

It seemed that the horrible swamps of Louvain had sucked him down. He was missing. Ten months passed.

Then, early in February, two beetle-browed armed policemen escorted to Gibraltar a thing that looked like a skeleton with blue eyes. It was A. A. in the flesh—in the absolute minimum of flesh necessary to keep a soul locked in a human body.

How had he got there? The Nazis had captured him. He had escaped, and, with ice-cold nerve and the devil's own impudence, cut his way across the length and breadth of Occupied Belgium and France and right down through Spain.

And here he was; haggard, worn out, ragged as an old crow's wing, desperately hungry, loaded with terrific experience, walking with the long, quiet lope of a lone wolf. He had got the habit of that prowling walk over some thousands of miles of enemy territory. He was grinning still.

By degrees his story came out.

That story will go down from generation to generation, as long as Englishmen thrill to cool courage and high endeavour.

We were at Louvain, says A. A.

The ground was too soft for tanks. This was infantry stuff, man-to-man.

At times like that you can see the real quality of the men who are fighting. "Jerry" is a good soldier—don't make the mistake of underrating him—but we are better . . . we were giving him all we had.

That wasn't very much, because we were hopelessly outnumbered. Still, with Brens, tommy-guns, mortars and rifles we did some good work.

I was Bren-gunner of my section, lying out on the swampy ground with my Number Two. The Nazis were pouring in. There was only a handful of us, but we'd held back the German advance for two days and two nights.

They'd tried, to rush us again and again. We stood firm. They left heaps of dead behind them. We were mowing them down like grass.

But the Nazi commanders seemed not to take any account of their men. They came on, and there was no counting them.

No Ammunition

My Number Two said: "There's some rumour about Belgium surrendering."

"I've come across this old man Rumour," I said, "and he's the biggest liar I know."

He said: "Jerries!"

I fired a short burst at things moving 500 yards in front. A man who had been crawling stood up and then fell down again; another one jumped, like a goalie after a ball, and then rolled over and over. Ammunition was running low, and the woods were crawling with "Jerries."

It was about then that the Platoon Runner came with news that we were falling back. The Nazis were pouring through. King Leopold really had cracked. It was madness to stay and be cut off . . . but it was up to me, with the Bren, to cover the retreat of my section.

I dug my elbows in. There were only four full magazines left—a minute or so of firing. We raked together a few spare clips of cartridges and half-filled a fifth magazine.

My Number Two said: "If we're beaten I'm going to take on the whole Nazi army of bloody murderers with a bayonet, and say good-night that way."

The Runner said: "If you play a game of cards you've got to lose a trick once in a while. You can chuck away your deuce of spades and still have a solo hand in clubs."

We could hear the branches cracking and the bushes rustling. "Jerry" was crashing through the wood, now, without any attempt at concealment. It was getting dark. They were going to advance under cover of night.

Western Front, 1940

"If we can't see them, it cuts both ways; they can't see us," the Runner said.

Night came. We heard them without seeing them. I opened fire at the sound of them.

I don't think I wasted very many of those last rounds. And maybe we held them just a bit; how were they to know we had only one Bren and a handful of rounds left?

But by midnight we were out of ammunition. The Bren was as useless as a stick now.

The "Jerries" had surrounded us. We were cut off. We'd done all we could, and the rest of the fellows had got away. Now it was our turn to try to get out, if we could.

It started to rain. The sky broke out in Verey lights. We knew there was less than one chance in ten thousand. All the same we crawled off, moving the way night animals move.

The rain helped. It was a curtain. We were half-suffocated in mud. Once I fell into a 6-ft. ditch full of water, and kept my mouth above the surface by clinging to a root, while a Nazi machine-gun went stuttering mad, as it seemed, less than twenty-five yards away.

We were tired out, hungry, cold and confused by the rain and the dark.

We crawled for three hours. Then I heard the Runner say: "So help me God, Bert! Look where we are." I felt a heap of empty cartridge-cases under my hand. We'd crawled in a circle, back to where we'd started from.

They Went East

We lay down again, then, under our first cover. The enemy was before and behind us, and they seemed thicker than the leaves in the wood to the right and left. We could only rest a little and try again.

Number Two said: "I've got a funny feeling about the east. Let's go east."

We did. We crawled with our tails towards the bit of sky in which the sun had set.

I can't tell you what happened on the way. Our brains were asleep; our bodies were numb; only there was something that made us go on.

I lost count of time until I heard the Runner say "Dawn." It was like being called out of a deep sleep. "Dawn."

Sure enough, day was breaking through a great black cloud of distant smoke. We crept to a clump of bushes. Number Two had a biscuit which he broke into three equal pieces. I put mine in my mouth, but before I had time to chew it, I fell asleep as if I had been sandbagged.

I woke up with the noonday sun burning my eyes. The bit of biscuit was still in my mouth. The Nazis had passed.

We looked down and saw a farmhouse. We knocked at the door and asked for food. The farmer was a burly old man with a crimson face; he didn't hesitate, but took us in and fed us.

Helpful Farmers

I tell you that while there are men like that farmer, Hitler will never entirely conquer any country in the world. The roads were choked with refugees. He wouldn't budge.

"For Hitler?" he said, and spat.

He would stay, and live or die on the land that he and his fathers before him had watered with their sweat, as he put it. The Nazis might kill him, he said, but they'd never drive him out.

But Belgium had fallen. We, my two comrades and I, were lost in German-occupied territory, and there was only the hope of a miracle between us and a Nazi prison-camp.

Miracles do happen, I thought. If we could get, by hook or by crook, to the coast, we might get away.

"Travel mostly by night," we decided.

By day we hid. By night we walked, hugging the shadows, from farm to farm. The Nazi machine hadn't got moving very thoroughly yet. And the farmers were with us. They never refused us food or shelter; they hate the Nazis with a bitterness which I cannot describe.

Two weeks passed; three weeks; we were still at liberty. But as we approached Ath we were warned to be careful. The Nazis were combing the countryside for stragglers from the Allied armies. But we had to sleep.

By

EX-GUARDSMAN

A.A.

On the night of June 6, we dug ourselves beds out of a haystack.

I was awakened by a thin little voice crying: *Hande hoch!*

Hands up.

I opened my eyes and stared straight into the muzzle of a tommy-gun.

A Nazi corporal was squinting along the barrel. Three soldiers stood behind him with fixed bayonets.

There was nothing to be done. Hitler had won that little trick. We went, with the bayonets at our backs, to Ath.

"They got us at last," said Number Two.

"We still got our legs," said the Runner. "And while I've got my legs, no Nazi's got me."

At Ath there was a column of prisoners, heavily guarded, standing silent on the road. There were Englishmen, Frenchmen and Belgians. You could see the marks of a hard fight in their weary faces and torn, stained clothes. They had fought like wildcats, getting their second wind.

March! We marched.

I asked where we were going, and was told "to Nivelles." There was one halt, for a meal of thin soup and black bread. Then we were hustled along until we paused, four kilometres before Nivelles, to get water from a farm.

It was a big, prosperous-looking farm, well fenced and hedged, with a great stone farmhouse.

I looked at it. Something turned over at the back of my head. It seemed to me that here, with a little quick thinking, we might escape. It was, again, a ten-thousand-to-one chance against us—bone-weary men with alert, ruthless guards around us. I said to my two pals:

"Do you fancy the idea of a Nazi prison camp?"

First Stage

They said No. I said: "If I think up a scheme for a getaway, are you game?"

"Game for anything," they replied, and I know that at that moment I said a prayer, something like: *Let this come off, please God.*

"Then do what I do," I said. "Stick close to me. Use your 'loaves.' Keep calm and don't hurry. I lay you three to one we make it."

Then I said to the guard: "Cigarette?"

I was very humble. He was not a bad fellow, as Nazis go; he gave me three broken cigarettes and a light.

"Do you mind if we go and get a drink of water, too?" I asked him.

"Be quick," he said, in quite good English.

I whispered: "Now. Steady. Walk slow. Walk as if you didn't give a damn whether you lived or died. Act *beaten*. Those Nazi gowks measure everybody by their own yardstick: once they're caught, they're beat. Act likewise. They'll never dream. . . ."

I talked a lot in that odd minute. I had a feeling that we'd get away. I knew we would.

I led the way to the farmhouse door. It stood half open. The farmer was talking to a Nazi officer, thirty yards away. Without slackening or quickening our pace, we walked straight in, along the passage, and out at the back door.

The house now stood between us and the guards.

I did not know it then. But in stepping over the threshold of that house I had stepped out on the first stage of the longest, weariest, toughest, craziest journey that I can ever hope to boast of.

Next week—**Lone Fugitive.**

Air Chief Marshal Sir J. C. SLESSOR,

Commander-in-Chief, Coastal Command

DEAR SIR JOHN,—The vigil of your Command is as constant and unwearying as the ever-restless waters of the ocean you guard.

Day and night, without fuss or publicity, the pilots, navigators and crews of the great aircraft you control patrol the vast expanses of the seas over which come those supplies so necessary for the Allied cause.

Fighter Command, with its spectacular brilliance, is always in the news. Bomber Command "steals" the front pages of the newspapers when it carries destruction to German cities. But only rarely does your Command get the praise and publicity it so deeply merits.

The recent smashing of two U-boat packs in a battle lasting eight days saved three Atlantic convoys. Not a torpedo was loosed against the ships; not a sailor received a scratch.

You threw into that battle only a small part of the formidable force at your disposal. And you proved, confidently and definitely, that air

power, properly employed, has the measure of the submarine.

Only the crews who keep watch and ward over thousands of square miles of sea know the monotony and soul-wearying nature of that work. Patrol after patrol goes out and returns many hours later to report no action of any kind.

But when the chance of action arises Coastal Command can hit as viciously and ruthlessly as any fighter or bomber squadron. Six U-boats sunk in the recent battle are sinister evidence of the killing power of your Sunderlands, Liberators, Venturas and Hudsons.

There is no respite for your men. They fly out in foul weather which grounds other aircraft. They know the convoys must get through. And they realise—even if some of us at home don't do so—that on them rests to a large extent the successful end of the war.

Sir John, the toast is "Coastal Command."—JOHN BULL.

OPEN LETTERS

The MEMBERS,

Bingley Urban Council

DEAR COUNCILLORS,—My first reaction when I read that you have decided to sack seventeen employees now serving in the Forces so that you will not have to make up their civilian pay was one of indignation. But further reflection brought the feeling that your case is not without its merits.

To make up the pay of those employees, as you have been ordered to do by the National Arbitration Tribunal, would cost £1,600—the equivalent to a 3½d. rate.

Your objection is not the extra rate so much as the fact that there are so many other Servicemen who don't get their pay made up. And it does seem unfair that the wives of soldiers, sailors and airmen should pay heavier rates out of small incomes so that a favoured few should benefit.

The fault lies not in your Council or in the Tribunal, but in the utter absence of uniformity in the treatment of Servicemen. Some get their pay made up. Others get allowances. And the great suffering majority don't get a halfpenny.

Your decision may be drastic, but if it results in some standard of equality being achieved it will have served its purpose.—JOHN BULL.

Mr. BASIL HENRIQUES,

Chairman, East London Juvenile Court

DEAR MR. HENRIQUES,—Concern about our girls is widespread. Evidence of their folly and stupidity is everywhere. And I am glad that you have called attention to this awful waste of budding womanhood.

You blame, primarily, parents and the lack of home life for the lapses of these children—they are little more—who "fall" for men in uniform and pursue "good times."

But you can't blame parents who, because of the exigencies of war, have not the time properly to look after their kiddies.

The blame must go to the war, to the men who provoked the war, and to those who have upset utterly the normal way of living. Until the war is over I can see little hope of our flighty girls being saved from themselves.—JOHN BULL.

Mr. HERBERT HENRY MARTIN,

Secretary, Lord's Day Observance Society

DEAR SIR,—Your informers are busy again. Because of the intervention of your Society, Worcester police have banned an all-magic show which was to have been given on a Sunday in aid of the British Legion Benevolent Fund.

Apparently your puritanical tendencies cease to apply when the question of collecting money on Sunday for *your* Society is raised.

It is good and godly, you say, to collect money after a sermon or a religious speech, but utterly wrong to collect money for the benefit of wounded or disabled men who have suffered so that there remains in this land religious toleration.

The Master, in whose steps supposedly you follow, and after Whose name your Society is called, said unto them: "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." The goodness of doing good prevails on Sunday as well as Monday, and if in doing that good people are entertained in harmless fashion, then all the better.

You are reported to have drawn up big plans for after the war. You want bigger premises, more staff, more meetings. You seem determined to put a wet, anti-social blanket on Britain's day of rest.

And, of course, you'll need more money to extend the blanket until it overshadows every little diversion that might bring brightness into Sunday.

There may be quite a number of people who will be unable to see eye to eye with you in this matter. And they might easily decide to have a shot at taking the blanket away.—JOHN BULL.

The PRESIDENT,

National Union of Small Shopkeepers

SIR,—Your Union has sent a telegram to Mr. Ernest Bevin, Minister of Labour, protesting against youths of eighteen being sent compulsorily into the pits.

The resolution sent to Mr. Bevin declared: "We have made great sacrifices to give our sons business careers, and once they are forced into the pits they will never come out."

Mrs. Smith is following your lead. She protests against her son going on raids against Berlin. Mr. Jones is annoyed because his son is driving a tank in Italy. Mrs. Robinson is furious because her boy is in a destroyer, guarding precious convoys across the Atlantic.

Please be sensible. You know the boys who go into the mines will be home as soon as the urgent need for coal is over.

They will not have suffered, either physically, morally or commercially. On the contrary, they will have had an experience which enriches their mind and broadens their outlook. They will have made contact with a phase of industrial life they would never otherwise have known.

And, as for careers, well, I believe millions of lads are fighting in the knowledge that they'll get a chance when they return.—JOHN BULL.

Mr. FRANK JENNER,

The Haven, Tonbridge

DEAR SIR,—For many years the Englishman's home has been his castle. The homes we know to-day are still castles. And, you, through a decision of Tonbridge Magistrates, have been told that you have an absolute right to decide who shall enter your house.

The trouble arose because your wife insisted on her family staying in the house. She failed to get a separation order from you because, like me, the Bench felt that a husband is the one person who can decide who comes into his house.

This is a signal victory. In-laws are usually pleasant people. But a home is a home, and man and wife get on much better if they have the place to themselves.

I salute you.—JOHN BULL.

P.S.—Mrs. "J.B." thinks the whole thing's stupid!

★ FRANK MOSS writes about men with imagination

Christmas Day Behind Barbed Wire

Safely repatriated, he might even get a real turkey

MORE than 200,000 British soldiers, sailors and airmen, with a sprinkling of civilians, will spend their Christmas behind barbed wire in enemy territory.

They will have many discomforts and be far from home, friends and freedom. But they will spend a merry Christmas, far merrier than the 80,000,000 Germans round them.

Christmas becomes an event to mark the passing of the days, to be prepared for weeks ahead, enjoyed with the enthusiasm of childhood and written about at length in letters "home" as a red-letter day that broke the monotony of camp life.

Large Meal

This will be the fifth Christmas in confinement for a few, the fourth for the many thousands captured in the Flanders battles. But every single one of them is certain it is the last.

Dinner is the highlight of Christmas wherever it is kept.

The Christmas dinners of the prisoners-of-war in Germany will come largely out of tins. It will be embellished by rations saved by sheer will-power for weeks so that on this one day at any rate every man can get up from the table feeling he couldn't eat another thing.

Two hundred and ten thousand special Christmas food parcels containing 1-lb. Christmas pudding, 1-lb. cake and other foods reached Geneva some time ago so that they could be distributed to the camps in good time.

Few men will be content to eat the foods straight from the tins. Christmas cakes will be decorated, sauce made to go with the puddings, and sprigs of holly to crown them.

Many of the prisoners have become ingenious cooks. Here is a prisoner's description of the cake he made for his mess last Christmas when they were held in Italy. "It contained 3 lb. fresh figs, packets of raisins, tin of marg., tin of milk, lots of sugar, and a flour made from ground biscuits. I coated it with chocolate. To make it rise I had to go sick so that I could get some bicarbonate of soda!"

What a camp cook lacks in ingredients he makes up for by his imaginative descriptions. Soup, fish, roast, pudding, dessert and coffee will be on every camp menu. It may be described like this, from the menu of Oflag XXI B last Christmas Day:

Consommé
Sardines sur canapé
Bœuf à la Milanaise
Pommes en robe des champs
Christmas pudding à la crème
Bonbons et café.

There is one thing of which relations and friends at home can be sure. Barring accidents of transport, the prisoners-of-war on Christmas Day will sit down to a bigger meal than anyone else in German Europe, except perhaps a few of the Nazi "high-ups." And even they won't get the same quality coffee and cigarettes!

Cooks and quartermasters scrape and hoard so that on Christmas Day there shall be four big meals. In most camps there will be a typical English breakfast to start the day.

Indeed, there were so many letters about over-eating at Christmas that one suspects belts which have been systematically tightened for months and even years cannot be so suddenly relaxed.

Drink is not so easily obtained. Most camps will make the best of water and home-made soft drinks. Some last year managed to get beer. One, at any rate, had home-made "hootch."

Letters and parcels from relatives at Christmas are eagerly awaited, but few arrive actually on Christmas Day. They have to travel by routes on which transport has become even more strained as a result of our bombing offensive. To cut down the strain on censors and transport, no cards are being sent this year, only letters.

Present-giving amongst the prisoners is not usual because of shortage of supplies and immense complications. But at least one camp found a lucky dip so successful that they will repeat it

Every prisoner made a present to a pool and then took his turn at a "lucky dip." The present-giving thus resulted only in the exchange of articles already in the camp, but made a pleasant gamble.

In fairness to the Germans, they put no obstacles in the way of the prisoners celebrating as best they can—except the barbed wire!

Pantomime

The shackling controversy seems to have ended and there is no prospect of any prisoners having to see Christmas in chains.

Lights-out restrictions are relaxed, and in some instances the celebrations go on until well into Boxing Day morning.

The entertainments generally include community singing, round games, or a fancy dress dance. Patience and ingenuity enable costumes for Hula-Hula girls, cowboys, Red Indians and Zulus, amongst other things, to be made from paper, old clothes, and string.

In most of the bigger camps the pantomime, written, produced, acted and dressed by the prisoners themselves, opens on Boxing Day. The fairy story, as in England, provides the necessary background for new songs and topical "gags," some of them at the expense of the guards!

In some officers' camps Boxing Day is the batmen and orderlies' Christmas, the officers cooking the dinner and waiting on them.

Every camp has its Christmas service, attended as at home by a large number who are not regular churchgoers. It may be a simple service with familiar hymns, or, in one of the larger camps, a carol service with full choir and orchestra. The prisoners have often written that they have not heard better singing under ideal conditions in England. One camp last year gave the "Messiah" complete on Christmas Day.

Football

At one or two camps Nativity plays are produced. Some will hold their services in the open, others in chapels they have built themselves. One at least has patiently made furnishings, including "stained glass" windows, made with red, blue and gold paper from chocolate wrappings, etc.

Nearly every camp has its football match in the British tradition, although it is generally postponed until Boxing Day to give the players a fair chance at the Christmas dinner!

Internationals are the favourite, but where England *v.* Scotland or Wales is not possible, then it is North *v.* South.

Probably most of the prisoners will have a traditional "White Christmas." It is colder than in Britain and snow falls earlier.

For weeks prisoners have been working on paper streamers, artificial flowers, paintings and other decorations for their rooms. They work wonders with the wrapping paper and string from their parcels, the chief "raw material." Many camps have a Christmas tree.

Oflag IV C excelled itself last year with a tree with tinsel decorations worked in glass and electric lights. The tables have cloths, even if sheets have to be taken from beds, washed and ironed for the occasion.

For prisoners who are working, Christmas Day is a holiday, although those on farms have to tend to the animals. Last year prisoners in the mines had to go back on Boxing Day, but others in factories, road work, etc., had two or three days' complete rest.

So these men make the best of Christmas in the face of every handicap. This year they will sing of "peace and good will toward men" with real hope that next Christmas it will be a reality for them.

By A. G. GARDINER

THIS is the decisive winter. The leaves have fallen. Before they come again, the Canadian Prime Minister said the other day, the end of the war in the West may be reached. However that may be, the end is certainly in sight, and the momentous decisions at Teheran leave no reasonable doubt what that end will be.

On the eve of the grand assault that is now imminent an estimate of the forces engaged—material, political and moral—seems opportune.

* * *

Let us glance at the military factors first. What is the outstanding feature of the struggle?

It is that since the "double event" of Stalingrad and El Alamein the Allies have had a year of uninterrupted victory, the enemy a year of uninterrupted failure.

The Russian invasion has become a catastrophe whose dimensions are without parallel. It is a catastrophe that is mortal.

Germany cannot escape. She cannot and dare not "cut her losses." She must surrender or bleed to death. *The Sword of Stalingrad is the symbol of her doom.*

No less dire has been her experience on the Southern front. She has been driven from the gates of the Suez, chased out of Africa, swept out of the Mediterranean.

Her Southern wall is crumbling. The Axis has gone. Germany's only European ally has surrendered and joined her enemies.

Next, the dominion of the air has passed out of her hands, and in passing has brought the war into the heart of Germany. The roof of Hitler's "fortress" has collapsed under the impact of bombardment such as no fortress in the history of war has sustained.

Day and night, from end to end of Germany, the cities are going up in flames. There is no effective defence. There is no power of retaliation.

THERE IS NOTHING BUT THE CERTAINTY THAT THE BLOWS WILL INCREASE IN VIOLENCE, AND THE LIMITLESS RESOURCES OF HER ENEMY ARE ASSEMBLED FOR THE ATTACK.

Sea-power is strangling her. She has no navy of her own. She has lost the navy of Italy. It is in the hands of her enemy. So are the remnants of the French Navy. Her U-boat hopes are dead and the Battle of the Atlantic is lost—witness the recent shattering defeat of the U-boats south of Iceland.

The blockade is tightening its grip, and her only ally, Japan, cannot throw her a lifeline.

For all the help she can give, Japan might as well be in the moon.

* * *

That is the position on sea, on land and in the air on the eve of the final trial of strength. But there is another factor that enters into the estimate of comparative military forces. It is the power of production. Here the advantage of the Allies is overwhelming.

But that is not all. While the factories in Britain, in America, in Russia are functioning

Germany's Worst Winter

undisturbed, the productive capacity of Germany is being reduced to chaos.

Her factories are under ceaseless attack. Her workers by the hundred-thousand are homeless and fleeing. Her transport resources—always one of her weakest spots—are breaking down. The social and industrial organisation of the country is in disequilibrium.

One of the reasons of the breakdown in Russia has been the failure in the supply of material due to sabotage, bombardment and the other interferences to which German production is subject.

* * *

Turn to another phase of the war potential: that of morale. This, as Napoleon insisted, has always been one of the most important elements of war.

It was never so important as it is under the conditions of totalitarian war, for never before has the main object of war been the destruction of civil populations.

It was the pursuit of that object that gave Hitler his spectacular successes in the early stages of the war.

The position is now dramatically reversed. In Britain, in Russia, and in America alike, the impetus and driving power of an unprecedented popular anger and determination are behind the battle-front.

In no other war has the solidarity of the British people been so unbroken. So in Russia. So in America. All factionism was blotted out by the infamy of the attack.

This solidarity carried us through the period of mortal danger. It is our great asset still. We have known many anxieties. The spirit of the people has never been one of them.

But fear of the morale of the people has been the nightmare of Hitler. The legend that the Army in 1918 was "stabbed in the back" by the home front is, of course, false; but it is the first article of the Nazi creed. It implies distrust of the people.

While Hitler's terrorism was winning its victories that distrust was submerged. But with the turn of the tide it came to the surface. Himmler's murder squads awe the public with the machine-gun. Goebbels' propaganda seeks to soothe it with daily slogans on the theme "We will never capitulate."

But always the fear of the home front grows. Always "heads are rolling" (Hitler's phrase) to keep the people in step through fear. *Is that the temper for a crisis like that which now confronts Germany?*

And connected with this question of morale is the ferment that is working in all the subjugated countries—Denmark, Norway, Holland, France, everywhere. It is all contributing to the strain that is put upon the nerves of the people as defeat draws nearer.

* * *

Finally, in this analysis of the forces employed, comes the political factor. Hitler has always relied upon political cunning in dividing his foes as much as upon military terrorism.

But their enemies will not be smiling

As one card after another failed him in air superiority, tank superiority, the U-boat, the warlike genius of Germany and so on—he has fallen back on the hopes of a political *tour de force* to save him from the wrath to come.

The bogy of Bolshevism has been his chief ground of hope. He has never given up the belief that in the end the Anglo-Russian-American alliance would fall asunder.

Even after his own Axis had gone with the fall of Mussolini he still clung to this belief as his sheet anchor.

Now the hope has finally gone. Teheran has killed it stone dead. It has revealed the fool's paradise in which he has lived.

WITH HIS OWN ALLIANCE IN RUINS, HE IS FACED WITH THE MOST FORMIDABLE COMBINATION OF POWERS THE WORLD HAS EVER SEEN, BOUND TO EACH OTHER IN INVINCIBLE LOYALTY.

It is a combination dedicated to one single purpose—the destruction of Prussian militarism and the prevention of the curse ever insulting the earth again.

In obedience to this sacred duty, all differences of outlook and ideology are ignored. The three mighty nations march in step inexorably to one goal—the smashing of the idol of war and the inauguration of the reign of law over the whole globe.

That is the message that Teheran delivered to the world. It is a message of doom for Hitler.

But it is a message of emancipation to mankind. It will bring all the nations of the earth into this final crusade for making the whole world one under the sanctum of law, justice and equality.

Is this a reasonably exact estimate of the forces that face each in this greatest moment of human history? I think it is. If it is, can there be any doubt of the issue?

French Rats Now Turn Somersaults

"IF you knew the kind of people who are now stretching feelers from Vichy to Algiers and offering their services to the National Committee you wouldn't believe it—or it would make you sick," said a prominent Fighting Frenchman to me the other day.

Of all Nazi-occupied countries, France has in her political zoos the most complete collection of that war time animal, half reptile and half rat, called "quisling."

★ ★ ★

There are two types of quislings: those who know they are doomed when Hitler collapses, and those who think they still have a chance of escaping retribution.

The former are men who have so deliberately and so openly thrown in their lot with the invaders that no belated somersault could save them.

The latter were either clever or lucky enough not to get too deeply entangled in treasonable dealings with the enemy.

The shrewdest of "collaborationists" began to withdraw from the limelight about two years ago, when America came into the war.

Others waited for another year—until the German disasters at El Alamein and Stalingrad.

The rest saw the red light only when Mussolini fell from power.

Since then all have been intensely studying the developments in Italy and, particularly, the dealings between the Allies, King Victor Emmanuel, Badoglio, Sforza, the local Fascist authorities and the local anti-Fascists.

They have been seeking a guide for their own future moves.

They have reached the conclusion that, while it would be premature and too risky for them to turn their coats publicly and to challenge openly the present régime of subservience to the occupying Power, it would be profitable to make some Democratic gesture which might impress favourably the statesmen in Washington and in London.

Men like Laval, De Brinon, Déat, Doriot and Bergery know they have no alternative but to carry on as tools of the Nazis till the bitter end.

★ ★ ★

But there are others who believe that they still have a chance and who are determined to save their skins while they think it is not yet too late.

That such notorious defeatists as Georges Bonnet and Anatole de Monzie, who played a nefarious part in the betrayal of the Allied cause in 1940, never became Ministers in Vichy was by no means due to their own virtues.

It just happened to be their good luck that Laval feared their talent for intrigue and kept these potential rivals out of his Government.

There was a time—in the heyday of Hitler's victories—when Georges Bonnet, De Monzie and a few other rats of the same species bitterly complained to Otto Abetz, chief Nazi envoy in Paris, about Laval's lack of gratitude for their services as Fifth Columnists.

★ ★ ★

Now they bless that personal feud which kept them out of the news for three long years!

But they have still access to old Marshal Pétain.

It is they who have persuaded him that some "Democratic" gesture must now be made in anticipation of the German collapse.

It was Bonnet, De Monzie and Co. who inspired Pétain's attempt to announce in a broadcast the restoration of a semblance of parliamentary régime.

The Nazis and Laval vetoed it because they knew only too well what was the real meaning and purpose of that move: these ex-collaborationists with the Germans, the temporary victors of yesterday, were anxious to make a discreet offer of collaboration to the Allies, the permanent victors of to-morrow.

VICTOR SCHIFF.

Girl Workers in Danger

ONE of the most imperative needs of this war has been the necessity of sending young girls to far-distant towns to work in war factories.

Most of them have never been away from home before.

Few, therefore, know as much as their mothers of the art of extracting the last ha'penny out of every pound.

Some ... workers, untuckier than these girls, have to be content with bare meals and empty purses

DISILLUSION

They are often raw enough to imagine themselves quite wealthy when they open their first weekly wage packet of £2 10s., the sum commonly paid to girls directed to work away from home by the Ministry of Labour.

They try their hand at budgeting for a few weeks.

And then comes chronic, hopeless disillusionment.

One of my investigators has been round and about trying to find what these young girls do with their windfalls of £2 10s. a week.

First he went to Cheltenham, the Gloucestershire spa town.

Here, as elsewhere, the Ministry of Labour is trying to supply hostels and billets of a satisfactory kind at a price the girls are able to afford.

But here, as elsewhere, the war jobs grow in number far quicker than the accommodation available.

BY OUR SPECIAL COMMISSIONER

The young women are therefore obliged to find ordinary board and lodgings in the town.

The local billeting officer has written local landladies urging them to accommodate the young war workers at 30s. a week—for bed, two meals a day, and full week-end board.

But that has had one very unsatisfactory result.

Many of the landladies who had been prepared to accept girls at a lower figure have now accepted this as a minimum and raised their prices accordingly.

With the result that it is possible to arrive at some sort of budget for these fifty shilling-a-week girls:

	£	s.	d.
Lodgings	1	10	0
Lunches		5	0
Health Insurance, etc.		2	0
Fares		2	0
Income tax		4	6
Laundry		2	0
	£2	5	6

In most cases the expenses detailed are more rather than less.

NO EXTRAS

Yet, out of what is left of her £2 10s. a girl has to supply herself with clothes, make-up and little feminine luxuries as important to a girl as are cigarettes to a man.

My investigator found towns where board and lodgings could be found for a few shillings less.

But in most of these towns—especially where girls have to live five or even seven miles outside the town—fares or other expenses are considerably higher.

There are cases where a girl who spends an hour or more travelling through the darkness of early morning can't possibly afford a few coppers for a hot drink before she begins her work.

And, in Cheltenham as elsewhere, a weekly visit to the cinema is out of the question. Everything apart from bare necessities is out of the question unless a girl can find a boy friend whose pocket can buy a little light relief for her.

And there's the danger.

The vast majority of these girls are aiming at decent independence, despite the temptation of living in towns dense with men with money to burn.

TEMPTATIONS

Certain officials told my investigator with pride that the number of girls who had "gone the wrong way" as a result of these economic difficulties had been surprisingly small.

I see no reason why *they* should be proud.

It is due solely to the good sense of the girls as a whole.

The point is that the State is dangling temptation before the eyes of these young people as things are at present.

We have no right to expect them to scramble through without a penny in their purses after bare necessity has been met.

The Ministry of Labour must solve the problem either by cheapening the cost of accommodation or giving the girls higher wages.

Life centred round a landlady's iron bed, bare meals and an empty purse is too rich in temptation, too poor in happiness.

PUBLIC BENEFACTOR

Mr. E. C. Andrews, Fallbrook, Plumpton, Sussex, has been awarded this week's £1 1s.

Letters are invited with information for investigation concerning any suspected scandal or ramp. Address: Public Benefactor, JOHN BULL, 93-4, Long Acre, London, W.C.2.

★ **Time, skill and ... are being wasted**

IDLE HANDS

CHATTER, idleness and time-killing have been substituted for blood, sweat and tears in some of our war factories.

And judging from the complaints they send to us, most of the workers would prefer the blood, sweat and tears.

One of the angriest of these complaints reaches us from a monster "hush, hush" factory in the West Country.

Women desperate to play some big part in the final onslaught on Hitler's fortress complain that they've been given little or nothing to do in the last six weeks.

Protesting to the management, they have been advised not to make "a fuss"!

Those bold enough to reinforce their protests have been threatened with night work.

To the surprise of the management they replied that they'd welcome night work.

But it appeared that the management regarded night work as nothing more than a threat of punishment.

For these women soon discovered that night work was no more than night idling.

It was largely a matter of sleeping in cloak-rooms until the time came to clock off—when they were free to go home.

Here are some typical complaints from workers in this particular factory.

One girl who has been there for five weeks said she had not done a real day's work up to date.

Knitting at Work

She took her knitting to work, and when she grew tired of knitting read a novel to help pass the time away.

"I was doing a useful job before I was called up for this special war work," she added indignantly.

Another girl said: "In the past two days I have been able to knit a pair of gloves, write several letters and do other odd things, when I should have had work to do. And this is essential war work!"

These girls tell you stories of girls "skylarking" about for hours against their real inclination.

Some of them career about on trolleys through the vast works, engaged in races as a means of killing time.

Sometimes it is "like Bedlam."

"It is a wrench to be taken from our homes and dumped in a strange part of the country, but we would face these little hardships cheerfully if there were any sign that our services were really wanted," said another girl worker.

The catering arrangements at this establishment have also aroused considerable comment among the browned-off workers.

Large quantities of food are wasted and allowed to rot apparently because there is a surplus of supplies over requirements.

Recently a big dance was organised for the factory staff, at which a host of war workers attended. Catering was on a lavish scale.

"Enough food was wasted at this function to supply the residents in this area for a whole week," said one of those who took part in this social function.

It would be bad enough if these conditions were confined to this particular war production factory, but the trouble is more widespread.

A series of "surprise" visits by Ministry of Labour officials to some of the war factories would yield some interesting results, particularly if statements were collected from the workers employed.

TURN THEM OUT!

BOOKS are wanted urgently to shape the future of thousands of men in the Forces. Books to enable them to study for a career. Books that are already enabling them to pass examinations!

Last week we mentioned the names of some of these textbooks. Now we give a further list.

If you have copies of any of the following, turn them out for the benefit of the men fighting for you:

Durell's "Matriculation Trigonometry" (Part 1); Watson's "Agriculture"; Spicer's "Practical Auditing"; Rankin's "Executorship, Law and Accounts"; Jacobs' "Law of Bills of Exchange"; Barfield's "Principles and Practice of Accident Insurance"; King's "Elements of Statistical Methods"; Holland's "Partnership, Law and Accounts," and Hazell's "Understand Your Car."

Hand them in to any post office as "Books for the Forces," and you'll be doing the Forces a really good turn!

HUMAN MACHINE

Have a Thought for Ourselves

● A young college student wrote home to his father the story of a football match in which his side had been heavily defeated. "I'm afraid the other team found a big hole in our side," he wrote. "I was the hole."

There are not many of us who have that amount of moral courage and downright honesty.

We have it all right when we have achieved some measure of success, when we have done something, won something, made a name for ourselves. Then, indeed, we are only too ready to acknowledge our share in the achievement. We did it—or at least we had a big hand in it—and we don't care who knows it!

But when it is a case of failure we are not nearly so ready to take a bow.

But let's be fair to ourselves. It isn't altogether our fault that we are so chary in admitting responsibility for failure. The world is not a very charitable place, and failure is usually visited with penalties that it doesn't by any means always deserve.

We may do our best, our very best, and still fail; and there is nothing disgraceful about that.

We all need, in fact, to practise two virtues much more frequently than we do.

We need to be much more honest with ourselves, and much readier to acknowledge lack of success as being due—at least in part—to ourselves; and we all, every one of us, need to be much more charitable to and forbearing with those who do fail.

We are much too apt to forget that life is a co-operative business. We can none of us afford to sneer at anyone else. "Give to the world the best you have, and the best will come back to you." And who can ask more?

Was she the most generous of women, or the most cowardly?

GRATITUDE

By GERALD KERSH

★

THE operation was a success, but I awoke with bruised knuckles. The Sister saw me looking at them and said, in a matter-of-fact tone, that as I was coming out of the anæsthetic I had punched the surgeon on the jaw. Not content with that, I had given a nurse a black eye.

It was nothing, said the Sister; people often did things like that, or tried to . . .

"And language! You'd be surprised. People you'd never suspect come out with words you'd never think they knew! In your case, Mr. Kersh, it was only the instinct of self-preservation. You were trying to defend yourself while unconscious."

"I can't tell you how sorry I am, Sister!"

"Oh, that's quite all right; it's nothing to what some people do."

"What sort of things do they say under anæsthetic?"

"It wouldn't be fair to repeat them . . . and even so, it wouldn't be nice to. People are very funny, on the whole, don't you think?"

"Screamingly funny."

"For instance, there was a certain lady . . ."

A CERTAIN lady (said the Sister) came to this hospital for a fairly serious operation on her tummy.

She was a nice lady, quite good-looking, fairly young, and very well-to-do; she had a private room, and half London seemed to be sending her flowers and fruit and jellies and things.

Some patients are a little difficult, but she was not. As a matter of fact she was quite the reverse.

We do our best to make people comfortable, because that's our job. It's nice to be appreciated, but we don't really expect to be thanked . . . let alone remembered.

Well, as I was saying, this lady behaved as if she was afraid of us—of me in particular.

You know how little boys, when they are late for school, sometimes bring the teacher some flower or an apple? She behaved rather like that.

It was really quite embarrassing. As soon as any of us came into the room she would offer something—a grape, a peach, or a carnation.

She told one of the girls that she would get her a job as a doctor's receptionist in Harley Street, at five pounds a week. She suggested to me that I might start a private nursing home . . . she'd find the money, because I was so wonderful and marvellous.

SHE insisted on giving me an angora bed-jacket that I admired . . . a lovely red one. I didn't want to take it, but she insisted, so I didn't refuse.

She was one of Mr. X's private patients. Wonderful surgeon, that man—he wouldn't stick a scalpel into a private patient for less than a hundred guineas; does a lot of free work, though.

She was in here for about a week before her operation, and within about four days she was everybody's friend.

She even made up to old Mrs. Biggs, who makes the fires—asked her whether she had a husband, and if he would like a few suits of clothes and a nice winter overcoat, because her own husband had some that had got too small for him; kept giving her grapes, and all that kind of thing.

She had hundreds and hundreds . . . well, anyway, an awful lot of lovely magazines and books, great stacks of them. She said that when she left here she'd leave them behind for us.

No doubt she was rolling in money. Her hands were covered with jewels. As she said, she liked jewels for their beauty rather than for their value.

h: night sister was given a fur coat

Her engagement ring was a great big sapphire: she said she was going to be buried with it on. That, she said, had a sentimental value.

But on her little finger, next to it, she wore a ring with a diamond in it about as big as your thumb-nail and worth an awful lot of money.

On the evening before her operation I came in to make her comfortable and say good-night to her, as one usually does. She said to me: "Sister, I want to give you something."

I said: "It's very kind of you, but I'm sure you've given me enough already."

But she said: "It would give me so much pleasure if you will accept a little gift from me; so will you? Please? Please, Sister?"

She took off her diamond ring and put it on my little finger. I was absolutely stunned, because the diamond must have been worth hundreds of pounds.

I SAID: "You can't give me this!" All the same, I felt a kind of flutter, because as it happens I've always had, really, an idiotic liking for diamonds . . . I mean, large sparkling ones.

You only need to look at me to see that nobody in his right senses would ever be likely to offer me one. And here was this lady simply throwing one at me!

I told her, naturally, that I couldn't possibly accept it.

But she argued. She said that the diamond meant nothing to her, and she'd taken a liking to me, and that it really would give her very great pleasure indeed to know that I had it. She didn't want it, she said.

In short, after a long rigmarole, I took the ring.

I was afraid to carry it about with me, so I asked the Matron to put it in the safe. She told me what a lucky girl I was. Everybody was a lucky girl that night.

The night sister was given a fur coat. The night nurse got a satin dressing-gown that you couldn't have bought for twenty pounds. Everybody agreed that there never had been a patient in the hospital like her.

In saw her next morning. She was scared stiff, and kept asking me if I thought she'd die. Of course, she wasn't going to die, the silly woman!

The operation was fairly serious, but we do things like that three times a day. You ought to have seen some of the women and children we had here during the Blitz!

So she went down, and Mr. X did his stuff, as usual—a beautiful operation—and she came up again, right as rain.

We do the best we can for everybody, as you know; it's our job. We didn't treat this lady any better, therefore, than anybody else: if she had been an organ-grinder we'd still have done the best we could to make her well and comfortable.

BUT since she had given us all those nice things in her gratitude, well, we had a kind of personal feeling for her, and we were particularly glad to see her coming through safe and sound.

I was there when she woke up. She kissed my hand and held it, and asked if she was all right. I said that she was, and she kissed my hand again, God-blessed me, and went to sleep, as they always do.

She woke up again at about five in the afternoon. I was there again. The first thing she said was: "Where's my ring?"

I said: "In the safe."

"Bring it back at once," she said.

One has one's pride. I got it for her, gave it to her, and saw her put it on.

Later, she said to me: "Where on earth is my bed-jacket?"

She got that back, too. The long and the short of it is, that she got everything back from everybody, as calmly as you like.

When she left she gave me one of those sixpenny paper-covered books of poetry as a thanks-offering and that was that.

Now, what do you say to that? Why did she have to go and do things like that? Was it because she felt that she was at our mercy? Did she think that we needed to be confidence tricked into saving her life? She must have known that we would do our best in any case, surely?

Why are people so mean and cruel? It isn't necessary to be mean and cruel, is it? Then why do people do things like that, just because they're afraid they're going to die?

"I don't know," I said.

"Nor do I," said the Sister, with a good-humoured laugh.

LET'S BE FAIR TO THE WEATHER

OUR English climate used to be a joke. And not just a joke, but the joke.

If you were no good at all as a wit, if you couldn't see a joke yourself, if nobody laughed at anything you said from Monday morning to Sunday night, you had no need to despair in the old days. You simply mentioned the English climate and everybody started rocking.

★ ★ ★

On the music-halls comedians who were not in themselves very funny have made reputations as tall as Nelson's Column out of the English climate.

Barbers, as is well known, lived on it for years. If they had not talked about the English climate they would never have talked about anything.

The same with milkmen.

As for foreigners, they wrote books about it. They wondered how we stuck it. They landed on our shores. They started with amazement.

You'd only to say "English climate" and people began to titter.

We here in this land used to feel very inferior about it.

We used to read about the South Sea Islands, with their blue lagoons and empty skies and yellow beaches. We used to hear about "Sunny Italy" and envy the people who could go there in the winter time. We used to dream about North Africa, where it was always "June in January" on the golden sands. We used to wonder what had hit us.

But now there is a war on the truth seems to have come a-visiting.

According to an American spokesman, the Jap is the very least of the enemies the Doughboys have to fight in the glorious South Sea Islands. The worst of all is, perhaps, rain—rain, rain and more rain. Another is fog, so that they never see the blue lagoons and empty skies and yellow beaches. The South Sea Islands seem to be a mess.

Italy appears to be all flooded rivers and cloudbursts.

Even Russia is said to be nothing but snow.

★ ★ ★

Anyway, I hope we've heard the last of these stupid titters.

Because of one thing we are certain after the front-line reports of the last two or three years:

The English climate is no joke.

A. G.

★ If you are in doubt, write to HUMANIST, at 93, Long Acre, London, W.C.2. You will receive a guinea if your letter is quoted on this page (without, of course, giving your name)

He's happy and absorbed

WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE YOUTH CLUBS?

NOW that youth clubs are springing up all over the country, it is disquieting to receive a serious complaint from a man who has been a club leader for many years.

So many of our young people ridicule the scheme, he writes, and all round are voices saying that attendance should be made compulsory.

Frankly, I am bewildered. Compulsion is opposed to the whole spirit of the movement.

But we find many of the young people frequenting public-houses, attending dances or pictures every night of the week, refusing to attend for interview after registration, or, if attending, giving false information about organisations they pretend to belong to, and having no intention of following suggestions made by kindly interviewers.

What can we do to remedy this sad state of affairs?

In another letter he cites the case of a girl who goes to the cinema five times a week, and to a dance another night. When asked about the remaining night she said that was her "good night out."

The Government is taking the youth movement seriously. It has been discussed in both Houses, and it will feature in the long-awaited Education Bill. But it is clear from the letter that there is something wrong somewhere

Surely it is natural for young people to get together? Perhaps there is something wrong with the leaders? Are the clubs too serious? Are they too frivolous? Or is it something quite different which we have not discovered?

The only people who can clear up the mystery are the young fellows and girls themselves. I should be glad to have their candid opinions and will print the most helpful.

BEFORE I leave the subject, I might quote another letter from a man:

I called at a boys' club the other night and found everything very happy and peaceable. A couple of boys were playing chess; several were reading; in another room they were holding a table tennis tournament.

But suddenly there came in a couple of real "toughs" who snatched away the books and papers that were being read, and the chess-board was turned upside down in the middle of the game. Within two minutes there was a free fight.

I am not a club leader; in fact, I know little about clubs; but my friend has been giving three evenings a week to this work, and I just don't know how he sticks it.

What can be done when hooligans come in with the deliberate intention of smashing the place up?

It is easy to say "Keep the hooligans out of clubs," but these are the very people who need them most. Only a man of fine, strong character can succeed in such a place.

Then I have a letter from a mother who makes a complaint about our schools:

My daughter is just thirteen and attends a secondary school. She has two hours or more of homework in several subjects; and among other things she has to write a Ballad of Invasion!

After "swotting" and keeping the household in silence the best part of the evening, we retire to bed at 9.45 p.m.

A few minutes later, when we are all settled, I hear her going downstairs again to finish the ballad.

Do you consider this is the sort of thing to do last thing at night? What will it teach the children? Hatred of the enemy? Or is it preparing their minds for a better world after the war? I feel we are wasting our money.

There are really two separate problems mixed together in this letter. First of all, there is the question of too much homework.

It is a nuisance to adults, for it keeps them unnaturally quiet in the evenings when they want to chat and listen to wireless programmes; and it is bad for a boy or girl to be working right up to bedtime.

I am convinced that too much study under such conditions is bad not only for health but for the mind. The successful "swot" may pass exams., but he (or she) is a failure in social life through lack of self-confidence.

The other problem is about the writing of exercises destined to exploit the emotions created by war atmosphere. I see no reason why a girl should not try to write a ballad. Some of them would do it readily enough, whereas others would lie awake half the night stewing over it. The sensible thing would be to give the children a choice of subjects.

One cannot write a ballad about "Disarmament" or "Better Housing." It would not be a ballad.

EVIDENTLY the mother would like the children to write about pacific subjects. In the middle of a world war it is very difficult to forget the horror and violence which goes on night and day without intermission.

But the season of good will towards men is near, and we can give our kindlier feelings a chance. No Christmas problems have reached me this year, but I should like to take the opportunity of extending my best wishes—in advance—to all readers.

VOICE OF THE TROOPS

★ Have you an interesting letter from a relative in the Forces? ONE GUINEA will be paid for each one published—more if a good adventure story used at greater length—and all the letters are returned. 10s. 6d. for Readers' Views. Address all letters to "Voice," JOHN BULL, 93, Long Acre, London, W.C.2.

LIFE on the Italian front is described by Capt. A. Harton, R.A., in a letter to his wife at Corstorphine, Bank Drive, Edinburgh:

Some of the war scenes are reminiscent of France in the last war. Shelled and battle-scarred villages; lines of Army vehicles and guns on the roads. Grimy troops covered with dust and sweat, but still cheerfully plodding along. Crashed aeroplanes, the remains of shattered tanks and vehicles at the roadside; battered guns and dead horses, and the little mounds with crosses to mark the graves of the fallen, in all sorts of odd corners and fields.

. . . Yesterday I went up to the front line with the Major, and the shelling was a little uncomfortable. We reached a big bridge which had been partly destroyed. A pontoon bridge had been thrown across the river, which at this point roughly represented the borderline between Jerry and ourselves.

We went over the bridge, and suddenly there was a hell of a crump as a shell landed about two hundred yards off the bridge. Shrapnel whizzed all over the place as we went down to earth.

Later from a high place we could see a battle in progress, and we had been looking through our glasses for less than a minute when another shell whizzed over our heads and landed just behind us. It became so hot that we decided to withdraw. We had not gone far when we learned that the enemy was about a thousand yards up the road!

. . The plight of the civilians is pitiful. Women with their babies in their arms and little children trudging along the roads with their bundles of household belongings, getting covered with the dust from the constant stream of passing vehicles. They often beg for biscuits, which is about all we have to give them, but sometimes we give our bars of ration chocolate to the children.

Far from the Clyde

An Arab child singing, "I belong to Glasgow," seems a little incongruous, but here is the story in a letter from Sgt. R. R. Drysdale, R.A., in a letter to friends at Campbell Drive, Barrhead, Renfrewshire:

These native children are very bright and quick in the uptake. The other day we were in a café, when an Arab kiddie aged about ten, dressed chiefly in rags, gave a performance for our special benefit. To our astonishment he sang "I Belong to Glasgow" just as Will Fyfe would sing it, with all the Scots vernacular, absolutely perfect. As an encore he sang "You Are My Sunshine," and again the words were perfect.

Yet this child could hardly understand English, much less broad Scots. I suspect that he had learned the songs from British gramophone records. However, he was a great success, and the hat was passed round on his behalf, and it was a bumper collection.

"Medicine men and witch-doctors still flourish with their Ju-Ju"

Eighteen Wives

A West African chief with eighteen wives has problems which he confided to Pte. G. R. Saggers, who writes to his father at Oakwood Road, Rayleigh, Essex:

I returned yesterday after a three-day trek, which took me through the heart of a big forest to a primitive village where the medicine men and witch-doctors still flourish with their Ju-Ju or black magic.

The Chief was away when we arrived, but on the second day an escort heralded his approach with their horns and drums.

We joined with the crowd of cheering natives who went to meet him. What a welcome!

The procession was headed by the Chief's own body-guard of girl singers, shaking their dance rattles as accompaniment.

Then came "His Nibs," carried in a gaily decorated hammock by four stalwart bearers, with horn blowers and personal body-guard on either side.

I hadn't a visiting card, but when I introduced myself to the old boy, he sprang from his hammock and bid me welcome to his kingdom. In a short time it was like being the guest of honour at the Lord Mayor's Show, except that the Chief is more important than a Lord Mayor—as he is nothing less than a king.

After being brought up from the age of seven as a Christian in a civilised atmosphere, he said, it had been a bit of a strain to settle down to primitive and uncivilised ways.

One of his greatest troubles, I gathered, was to please and show affection for all his eighteen wives! He complained rather plaintively that he could not love them all, and was fast coming to the conclusion that polygamy is all wrong.

On my departure, he provided me with a hammock and bearers, and in this lordly style I was carried back fourteen miles through the forest.

He left at the same time, but after a while had to make a detour in order to investigate the mysterious disappearance of a beautiful young woman from one of the smaller villages.

It seemed that apart from his normal regal duties, and his matrimonial problems, the Chief also acted as the local Sherlock Holmes, but without the assistance of a Dr. Watson. Altogether a busy life.

Strange Brew

Tea-making under difficulties is described by Gnr. E. Rhodes, India Command, in a letter to his relatives at Ardgowan Road, Catford, London, S.E.:

Imagine this happening in England! We got hold of a biscuit tin, put a wire handle on it and some tea in the bottom. Then when the train stopped one of us ran to the engine and got the driver to fill our tin with boiling water from the steampipe of the engine. Good tea it made, too!

For the remainder of the journey our tin was filled every two hours or so, and we had tea, and still more tea. We live and learn. You must try this idea when travelling on the "Flying Scot," or on the 8.15 to London Bridge!

Many Captives

A period in the Mediterranean campaign, when prisoners were as plentiful as blackberries in autumn, is described by L./Cpl. J. E. Ashmore, R.E., in a letter to his mother at High Street, Eckington, Sheffield:

You can tell how excited I am by my spelling! Prisoners were coming in by the thousand. German generals in big Mercédès cars, complete with Iron Crosses, chauffeurs, batmen and everything, and the other ranks trudging in on foot and on lorries.

There are so many prisoners that it is impossible to guard them; we just show them where to go and they gladly go there. The other night our lads had a thousand prisoners inside a barbed wire enclosure, we bid them good-night and went to bed. Next morning we found two thousand prisoners inside the cage!

Beginnings Strange and Small

WE can't all see the road we've come,
we can't all see the finished task.
We can't all see our aims achieved.
It's rare in full reward to bask.

WE can't all see our plans fulfilled,
we can't all see wrong things put right.
We can't all see beyond toil's dust
to the broad and gold uplands of light.

WE can't all see the consequence of
having set upon our course,
we can't all see war's arms laid down
and peace prevail instead of force.

WE can't all see the fruitful hour
reaped from beginnings strange and small,
but God knows the beginners of hard tasks—
perhaps He loves them best of all.

J. M.

READERS' VIEWS IN A SENTENCE

MY brother, serving with H.M. Forces in Italy, was recently ordered to report at local Civil Defence H.Q. for duty. Perhaps his journey overseas was not necessary!—Mrs. P. A. Trickett, Parkstone, Dorset.

★ ★ ★

Legislation is necessary to make simple and less costly the purchase of a house. A man may have to spend almost a month's wages in solicitor's fees, etc., when an ordinary witnessed receipt, as in buying a motor-car, would suffice. —"Reason," Scunthorpe.

★ ★ ★

A collier is fined heavily if unable to carry out full Home Guard duties, yet mining is as vital as the work of the Forces. Which is more important, producing coal or parading for Home Guard?—Beryly Wynne, Park Avenue, Whitchurch.

★ ★ ★

Youth is promised its share in the brave new world, and the Midland Bank helps things along by appointing a new Chairman—aged eighty-one! — "L.," Devon.

TROOPS

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Commodore G. PURSSEY PHILLIPS describes how a Welsh engineer brought his crippled ship to port

Everything went well in the engine room until the bombers came

SHIP WITHOUT A RUDDER

AT the last minute some officers were going aboard the convoy.

You may think of this as the beginning of the job. But, actually, weeks of hard work have already been put in here. Fog buoys, mast-head angle tables, station-keeping instruments, signalling lanterns, ammunition, coal, oil, provisions, and all the convoy's special cargoes have been collected and distributed.

Intensive air and sea patrols have been out, clearing the route of U-boats, and making sure that no one gets away with the news of a "big do" afoot. Confidential books have been distributed to Convoy Skippers.

Preparation

There have been conferences about flying barrage kites, the use of radio, anchor lights, code names, times for passing buoys, "drill" in case of attack of various kinds. . . .

And then, floating pneumatic elevators and floating cranes and motor cranes and fixed cranes and ships' derricks and the splendid dockers have been working to load the ships.

Now, at 6.30 on a dark and freezing morning, the Convoy Commodore and some of the ships' officers walk along the pier, their torches gleaming greasily on the rimed timbers.

Dropping the Pilot

They exchange obscure service jokes about tin hats and code signals and the luck of shipmates and friends.

With them goes Chief Engineer Tom Bowen, of New Quay, Cardiganshire, on his way, though he does not know it, to earn his M.B.E.

Aboard his vessel, he goes down to the engine-room, after slinging his gear in his cabin. Everything is shipshape and ready for the voyage.

Presently, the pilot takes them out. In single file the convoy rides endlessly through the mist. Visibility is very poor. Overhead aircraft patrols can be heard humming to and fro; they turn out in all except totally impossible weather.

A sudden shout gives warning of a periscope to port. But it is only the mast of a sunken ship.

The biggest scare is caused by a brown owl that drifts silently and mysteriously past the bridge, and vanishes—apparently off its course!

The time comes to drop the pilot.

Extra Rations

The ships take up their positions and proceed quietly under the Commodore's charge. He is an old Cunard officer who had retired to grow roses.

Now he is lucky if he gets more than a catnap every two or three days.

Aboard the ship where Tom Bowen is in the engine-room everything goes well.

Her lifeboats are swung out ready for use. Her gunners gossip and watch the sky, their Balaclava helmets tightly on their heads.

It is while breakfast is being served that Bowen hears the warning, as one ship after another gets the message that hostile aircraft are approaching.

He goes stolidly on finishing his rashers and coffee, not unaware that he may need them to uphold him through weeks of voyaging in an open boat, or that they may perhaps be his last food on earth. On principle, he has an extra slice of bread and jam, and one more cup of coffee.

And then the five German bombers whirl in to the attack. They mean business, and are flown by veteran pilots who have done this job often before. They fly in, avoiding with grace and apparent ease the dirty balls of smoke that mark the gunfire, and they put down a salvo of bombs.

Bowen feels that his ship is sorely hit.

His seaman's instinct tells him that the vessel has gone out of control, even before the Captain's voice comes down the tube to him. . . .

Collision

She has, in fact, run amok at full speed, owing to a bomb hit which has partly destroyed the steering gear.

While Bowen attends swiftly to his engines, the ship drifts directly towards a consort.

The other vessel turns away, while more bombs come whining down just beside them. But there is no chance of avoiding the collision now—and the vessels collide with a deafening crash and a grinding that, once a seaman has heard it, never leaves him. I heard it once, under similar circumstances; it is a dreadful noise.

The two ships ground and grappled like fighting leviathans. Men shouted, engines throbbed, and the water, violently agitated by the collision, raced up the vessels' sides. Then the two staggered apart.

The German bombers were still trying to score. They had dropped twelve bombs when one of them stopped a neat little three-inch shell amidships, and puffed outwards in a cloud of sailing rubbish that floated down on to the sea.

The rest did not care for the look of this, and turned for home.

"The steering gear's gone, Mr. Bowen," the engineer was told. "Get some men and see what you can do with it."

Already the engines were full astern, and the vessel was coming to a standstill. For a ship without a rudder is a mad thing, and must be stopped.

Bowen and his men clambered through mess and debris to see what was wrong.

There was a good deal that was wrong—that much emerged on a very brief examination. The bomb had done a lot of damage in a short time

Meanwhile, the machinery space was rapidly flooding, and the bilge pumps had jammed. That did not help. The ship was already filling with water, and the sea was gurgling in dangerously.

The Chief Officer and the carpenter went to sound the wells. Other men were detached to help with the repairs, and others to set the pumps going.

This is one of those situations where the Master has to decide whether to abandon his ship and try to save the lives of his men, or whether to hold on in the hope of getting to port.

It is to the everlasting credit of our Merchant Service skippers that they never let go till the decks are almost sinking under their feet.

This one held on.

Mr. Bowen seemed to be everywhere, inspiring his men, directing here, improvising there. Chaos became order. Working often up to their necks in water, and sometimes having to dive under it to try to release some jammed gear or force away some debris, they first got the bilge pumps working again, then began to exhaust the water, and finally began repairs on the steering gear itself.

Rare Tribute

Work went on without meals, save for cups of coffee and biscuits handed to greasy men as they went about their jobs, and without sleep

In the end, the ship and her cargo were saved. She was able, at last, to head towards port.

When the pilot came aboard to help her in, and handed to the skipper the usual bundle of newspapers, he paid one of those rare and brief tributes that sailors exchange with one another.

"I should have thought she'd have to be beached—you must have a genius aboard to mend that!" he said, staring at the crumpled plates.

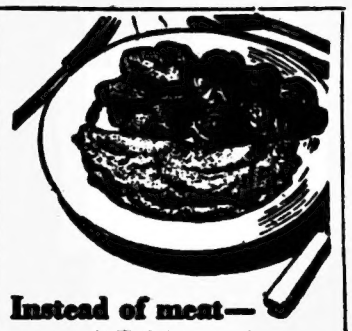
So one more ship was saved that Goebbels trumpeted abroad to the world as sunk.

-IT MUST BE

CHERRY BLOSSOM BOOT POLISH"

APPLY SPARINGLY—
THE SUPPLY IS RESTRICTED

CB/AL



Instead of meat—

a delicious Omelette!

Now that the allowance of dried eggs is one packet a month per ration book, you can serve delicious egg dishes two or three times a week!

Dried eggs have everything that shell eggs have got—except shell and water. None of the nutritional value of the eggs is lost.

And eggs, remember, are a protein food, like meat and fish; they're *body-building*, that is. Eggs are also a good source of iron and they're one of the richest sources of Vitamins A and D. They also contain some Vitamin B.

How lucky we are, then, at present to have such a plentiful supply of this valuable food-stuff! Serve a delicious omelette once a week, ringing the changes with chopped parsley or grated cheese.

Don't mix dried eggs with water till you are ready to use them.

A packet of 12 Dried Eggs costs only 1/3d.

Issued by the Ministry of Food London, W.

New Models for New Times

Post war

KERSHAW

SOHO CAMERAS will be

Better than ever

SMOKERS' 'FUR'

HOW TO DETECT IT— HOW TO PREVENT IT

Try this now. Run your tongue round your mouth — do you notice it . . . a rough woolly feeling? Smokers' fur has got a hold, and is staining your teeth. But don't worry, you can stop this fur from ruining the look of your teeth.

Dentists know smokers' fur is caused by excess acid in the mouth. Kill the acid and you shift the fur. 12,000 dentists say 'Milk of Magnesia' brand antacid is the most effective antacid known. They recommend smokers to use the toothpaste containing 'Milk of Magnesia' — the only toothpaste containing it — Phillips' Dental Magnesia.

Get a tube now and clean your teeth with it. Then you'll feel the difference. 1/1d. and 1/10½d. Sold Everywhere

RETURN EMPTY TUBES TO THE CHEMIST

Phillips' Dental Magnesia

★ *'Milk of Magnesia' is the trade mark of Phillips' preparation of Magnesia.*

LAST LAUGH

F. L. (Colne).—"The happiest and most contented members of the A.T.S. are to be found at our searchlight stations." They even greet the enemy with a beam?

S. L. (Boston).—"Should a woman really be allowed to choose her husband's clothes?" Why not? She probably selected his wife for him?

H. G. (Epping).—"Don't you simply love winding roads and sweeping moors in the country at this time of the year?" Having never wound or swept any, we cannot say.

HOUSEWIFE (Clacton).—"I am finding it very difficult to get camphor balls for moths." You should bear in mind, however, that many others are faced with the problem of getting delicacies for their pets.

W. S. (Sutton).—"According to a psychic authority it is not necessary for a house to be old to be haunted." We understand that there has been some very satisfactory utility table-rapping.

D. M. (Norwich).—"Music-hall audiences are not so demonstrative as they were." The reason is probably an economic one. Who would think nowadays of throwing even dried eggs at comedians?

G. J. (Taunton).—"Are there any underground newspapers circulating in London?" Only when careless passengers leave them on the Inner Circle.

E. K. (Exeter).—"A character actor says it is necessary to get inside the skin of a part and this means much hard work." And jolly hot work, too, pulling the necessary strings to make the panto horse wink and swish its tail.

F. K. (Falmouth).—"A North London man was having a bath when he was disturbed by burglars entering through the bathroom window." Very embarrassing. He couldn't submerge in the patriotic five inches of water.

G. L. (Dorking).—"Many people do not believe in table-rapping." And the foreign method of clapping the hands and saying "Ps-s-s-t!" has very little effect on the phlegmatic London waitress, either.

OLD BILL: BY BRUCE BAIRNSFATHER

"A young feller like you doan' remember, I spec. But yer should 'ave seed 'ow they Russians fought at Balaclava!"

Side-Slips

DAILY EXPRESS: — "His short story, 'The MONEY'S PAW.' . . ."

TELEGRAPH AND ANGUS:—"Having no meat to-day, we tried stuffed marrow. Split it lengthwise, peel, and take out the PITY centre."

HORNSEY JOURNAL:—". . . was presented with a BONY baby daughter . . ."

EVENING NEWS:—"Developments as sensational as the FACE of Mussolini. . . ."

NOTTINGHAM EVENING NEWS: ". . . were knocked down by a WAR at . . ."

GREATEST OF THESE

● Nothing can make it a Merry Christmas for a little Durham family.

At most it can be saved from being the most miserable Christmas ever.

1943 was very young when Fate first mauled them.

Dad, merchant navy stoker, was taken ill in an American port.

He could have got home for treatment as a passenger. But no, he signed on for duty—came home *working*.

Three weeks later he died in Newcastle General Hospital.

And now the little family musters the wife, aged twenty-five, crippled, incapable of working; a girl of seven; a lad of four and a half.

Total income (all from Public Assistance): 31s. 6d. a week, with 3s. extra winter coal allowance.

And rent, 8s. 6d. for two rooms. No wonder there are rent and insurance arrears already, and the sad little family watches their growth with terror.

No pension. We have fought for one—in vain. "Death not due to war injuries or abnormal war time conditions," says officialdom.

No help from the local Lord Mayor's Fund. "Not a Service man" is the excuse this time.

Nothing else, indeed, from any other source—except the little help you can help us to give.

We know what you feel about such national parsimony. And about Beveridge. But this little family and others like it need a lift now. Help us to help them all.

Donations (the smallest will be gratefully acknowledged) should be sent to the Secretary, JOHN BULL War Sufferers' Fund,* Box 44, 64, Long Acre, London, W.C.2. List of current subscriptions will be supplied on application, and all administrative expenses are borne by JOHN BULL.

**Registered under the War Charities Act, 1940, as "The JOHN BULL War Sufferers' Fund."*

RESULT OF "BULLETS" No. 1,403

FIRST PRIZE of £50 plus Radio

A. Pine, N.S.P.C.C. Office, West Bromwich, for this "Bullet":—

To Punish The Nazis Unchristian? Remember Huns' "Religion"!

£10: Mrs. G. R. Anny, c/o 9, Council Houses, Ponteland, Newcastle-on-Tyne.
War-time Christmas—*Quieter* Busy "Ringing Bell"!

£5: H. Evason, 14, Whitfield St., Birkenhead.
Let Bygones Be Bygones And—Spoil Family Row? Never!

£4: Miss E. Green, c/o Mrs. Hamill, 54, North End Rd., Golders Green.
An Extra Weapon—*No* Secret, Churchill's "Boom."

£3: F. Webb, 69, Birch Crescent, Tividale, Dudley.
Difficulties—Are Hitler's *Growling* "Battalions"

£2: Mrs. A. Hitchcox, 49, Charminster Rd., Bournemouth.
War-time Christmas—"Magic," Despite What's "Vanished."

£50 for 4 LETTERS NEXT PAGE

6 Prizes of 30s.:
M. M. Dougall, 3, Sutherland House, Sutherland Rd., W. Ealing, W.13.
In The Fighting—Last Bus Vanished Unnoticed.
Pte. E. Hardy, R.A.M.C., Somewhere-in-Britain.
Present For Berlin—A "White-Ant Christmas."
A. G. J. Pearce, 140, Bryngias Rd., Newport, Mon.
In The Fighting—Sergeant's A Different "Devil."
F. Platt, 82, Spring Lane, Lees, Oldham.
News From Home—Then Cottage "Deleted."
Nurse K. Skinner, Great Barr Colony, Birmingham.
Disgrace To Britain—Prison Hospitals, Mr. Morrison?
F. F. Worth, 50, Romany Rd., Northampton.
War-time Christmas—Don't "Let Baby Know."

A list of 80 winners of Christmas Cakes can be seen at these offices; 1,000 Merit Awards have been [illegible]

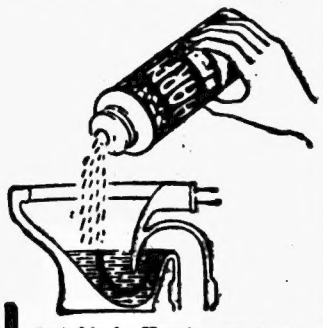
OVER 160 PRIZES WON IN "LAUGH-LINES" 145

Most meritorious entries were decided by Adjudication Committee to be those bearing the 4 KEY LETTERS in order F—J—A—D entered by following 4 competitors, who thus share £50, each also receiving Xmas Cake: J. Donovan, 43, Bexley Rd., Redditch; R. Jenkins, 84, Pillebrook Rd., Leytonstone, E.11; Gdsmn. W. Kingsley, Somewhere-in-Britain; P. J. O'Shea, Belleek, Co. Fermanagh.

Award for 1st Runners-up shared between 32 entrants with FIRST THREE letters in order above; 2nd Runners-up Awards for 126 entrants with FIRST TWO.

$100 CROSSWORD RESULT IN "GAZETTE."

How to clean the lavatory



1 Sprinkle in Harpic, and leave as long as possible. Harpic's cleansing action reaches right round into the S-bend.

2 Flush the lavatory. The whole bowl is clean and sanitary—the part you don't see, as well.

Specially made for the lavatory, Harpic's thorough action removes all discoloration—effectively cleans, disinfects, and deodorises the whole pan.

Harpic is easy to use and effective. Sprinkle it into the lavatory and leave as long as possible (last thing at night is a good time). Then flush. The whole bowl gleams white.

HARPIC

YEAST VITE

THE WHOLE TRUTH!

Hull, Oct. 11th, 1943.

Dear Sirs,

Before taking your wonderful Yeast-Vite tablets I was not well, and as I read several advertisements in the paper I decided to try them.

Now this is the whole truth—I have been taking your tablets for over 3 years and I have never had any sign of depression, and I still continue to take them. If any of my friends tell me they have a bad stomach, I just say—"Why don't you try Yeast-Vite tablets; they have done me good, and I used to suffer with my stomach."

My age is 51 in December . . . your Yeast-Vite tablets keep me going. You can use this letter as you wish.

(Sgd.) Mrs. D.

Alresford, Hants.
Oct. 4th, 1943.

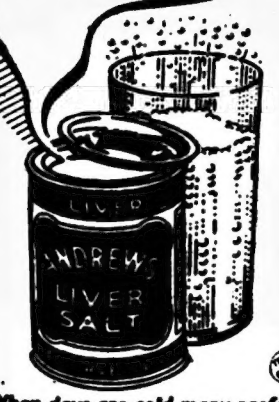
Dear Sirs,

I have had a very bad turn of neuritis. Thanks to your Yeast-Vite I am getting better again. I secured four customers for you last month; they speak very highly of your Yeast-Vite tablets; people think they are wonderful. My age is 83.

(Sgd.) W. D.

If you suffer from Headaches, Neuralgia, Rheumatism, Nerves, Indigestion, Sleeplessness, Constipation, simply obtain a bottle of YEAST-VITE Tonic Tablets, now in TWO SIZES ONLY, price 1/4 and 3/3 per bottle, including purchase tax. Do not blame your chemist if he is temporarily out of stock, he is doing his best in these difficult days of limited supplies and restricted transport. Irving's Yeast-Vite Ltd., Watford.

To keep fit INNER CLEANLINESS comes first



When days are cold many prefer Andrews with the chill off

ANDREWS

Family size tin 2/- including purchase tax

Guaranteed to contain 8 ozs.

(41-14°)

DOUBLE PRIZES in this amusing 5-MINUTE CONTEST!

IT'S QUICK—IT'S EASY!

HERE'S just the thing for five minutes of your Christmas leisure! Enjoy a few chuckles over the amusing *Bullets* below—then try out your sense of humour by giving FOUR KEY LETTERS as directed on your *Laugh-Lines* coupon below.

Provided your entry is posted not later than January 3, you may well win a big cheque and a delicious 4-lb Fruit Cake.

£50 CASH FIRST PRIZE

HUNDREDS of other AWARDS for 1st & 2nd RUNNERS-UP

4lb. FRUIT CAKES WITH ALL CASH PRIZES

XWORDS Send 1d. stamp for Gazette containing £100 Xword Offer to:—Gazette Dept., 1, Shingsby Place, London, W.C.2.

A. When The Siren Went—Tomcat Recalled Forgotten "Date"!
B. Upset The Ledger—Overhearing "He's Eaten It!"
C. Wifey's Photo—Lifelike—"Dropped On Henpeck"!
D. What Auntie Needs—New Umbrella—Burglar, Ribs!
E. At The Sergeant's Wedding—"Blimey—She's *Kissing* Him!"
F. Like A Thunderbolt—My Clap—Symphony Unfinished!
H. Thinking Hard—Scratching Skull's Head, Professor!
J. Grim Warning—"Now, Henry—No Sirens!"
K. Uproar In The Pub—Fortunately Only *Blood* Spilt!

GIVE KEY LETTERS of 4 BEST "LAUGH LINES"—ENTRY COLS. BELOW

HOW YOU CAN WIN £50

Carefully select the FOUR most humorous, apt and original "Bullets" from list. Then show your judgment of their order of merit by giving FOUR KEY LETTERS ONLY in column of this entry coupon. Additional columns for extra attempts if desired. Address entry as at foot of page—or enclose with Bullets entry.

1ST						
2ND						
3RD						
4TH						

FEE 2d PER COL. Is. FOR 6

I agree to Rules and enclose the correct P.O. or stamps entry-fee, including 1d. for "Bullets" Bulletin dated Jan. 15.

P.O. Value..... No..... CLOSING POSTMARK MONDAY, JAN. 3.

Signed .....

Address 148

OVER 160 'LAUGH-LINES' PRIZES WON THIS WEEK—SEE RESULT ON PAGE 14

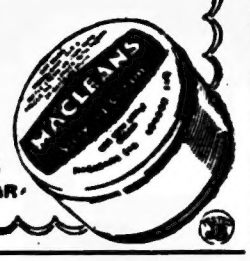
RULES 1.—**Bullets** First Prize will be awarded for best Bullet received and other prizes in order of merit, the test being cleverness, aptness and originality; **Laugh-Lines** First to entrant who in any one column submits, IN INK, the most meritorious placing of four most humorous, apt and original **Bullets**, as decided by Expert Committee of **Bullets** Judges. Ties divide and not more than one **Laugh-Lines** prize per Contest to any one entrant. 2.—The Editor undertakes that all entries in **Bullets** and **Laugh-Lines** shall receive careful consideration by a staff of competent adjudicators. 3.—To cover 1d. Bulletin charge and entry-fee enclose P.O. or stamps—6d. per two **Bullets** and 6d. per three **Laugh-Lines** columns used. **Two Bullets** FREE with each four paid; three **Laugh-Lines** columns FREE with each nine paid. Plain paper entries allowed in both Contests. If P.O. used, make payable to JOHN BULL, cross & Co., write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Members of H.M. Forces half-rate if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated. 4.—Entries accepted only on condition that results of this week's Contests, published in JOHN BULL dated Jan. 22, also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Employees of Odhams Press Ltd. and families not eligible.

How to get a MACLEAN SHAVE

- Just try the quick lathering properties of Macleans Shaving Cream and notice its soothing effect on your skin. See how economical it is, too. A very little Macleans gives you the easiest, smoothest shave you ever enjoyed.

1 *Wet the beard thoroughly.*
2 *Put a little cream on your chin with finger tip.*
3 *Lather with plenty of water on brush.*

1/3 PER JAR



Mother! Child's Best Laxative is 'California Syrup of Figs'

Children love the pleasant taste of 'California Syrup of Figs,' and gladly take it even when bilious, feverish, sick or constipated. No other laxative regulates the tender little bowels so nicely. It sweetens the stomach and moves the bowels without cramping or over-acting.

Millions of mothers depend upon this gentle, harmless laxative.

Tell your chemist you want 'California Syrup of Figs,' which has full directions for babies and children of all ages. Obtainable everywhere at 1/4 and 2/6.

Advised by a chemist to use

Germolene
ASEPTIC OINTMENT

all itching & irritation disappeared

Germolene is always so successful because it closely resembles the natural oil of healthy youthful skin. Read this: "I thank you for the benefit derived from Germolene—about two months ago I developed a rash and the itching and inflammation became intolerable. I was advised by a chemist to use Germolene. At the end of two weeks all inflammation and irritation had disappeared." *L.B., Witney.* You never know when you may need Germolene—get a tin now. 1/4 and 3/3 including Purchase Tax.

USE GERMOLENE

for ECZEMA, IMPETIGO, PIMPLES, CHAPS, CHILBLAINS, COLD SORES, BLISTERS, INFLAMMATION and CHAFING of the SKIN, etc.

CHEQUES RADIO and 50 FAMILY FEASTS!

FIRST £50 CASH plus £25 RADIO

£10 £5 £4 £3 £2 £1 £30/- £1000 MERIT AWARDS

FINE 4lb FRUIT CAKES 50 ENTRANTS

USE any of these "EXAMPLES"

TO make a Bullet simply add TWO, THREE or FOUR words of apt and original comment to any of the Examples below. Winners on page 14 show you various ways to score. Jo; Wire Day—Friday, Jan. 14.

COMING IN 1944
ALL NATIONS
LAND OF PLENTY
WE MAINTAIN
FORTRESS OF EUROPE
FUGITIVE FROM JUSTICE
POINTS THE WAY
NAZI RATS
ANOTHER WAR
SOMETIMES FORGOTTEN

BULLETS 1,403 RESULT appears on page 14

BIT OF A BLOW
PARTY POLITICS
ONE THING'S CERTAIN
LAID THE FOUNDATION
FOR A CHANGE
MISSES NOTHING
HOLY MATRIMONY
SHOWS THINGS ARE BAD
RADIO COMEDIAN
WE DO OUR BEST, BUT

Six "Examples" below for completion with any ONE additional word of your choice in the position indicated by dotted line. Make "Bullets" from them as usual.

DAD LOST HIS.....AND
TO SAVE.....
NOT AFRAID OF .....
APPEALS TO.....
ONCE A.....
IN THE THROES OF .....

EXAMPLE .....
BULLET .....
EXAMPLE .....
BULLET .....
EXAMPLE .....
BULLET .....
EXAMPLE .....
BULLET .....

2 FREE BULLETS allowed with 4 paid—enter in blank margin below.

I agree to enter in accordance with the Rules [illegible] at the rate of 6d. for each two paid Bullets [illegible] Bulletin dated Jan. 15. IF INK RUNS, USE PLAIN PAPER OF COUPON SIZE.

P.O. Value .....
No. ..... Closing Postmark, 1,407 Monday, JAN. 3
Signed .....
Address .....

CUT ROUND THIS LINE

ADDRESS ENTRY "Bullets" 1,407—or "Laugh-Lines" 149, "JOHN BULL," LONG ACRE, LONDON, W.C.2. Comp.).

They're always glad of that cup of tea and biscuits. Even when nothing happens at all, the long wakeful hours call for a little light refreshment. Biscuits are easily carried, easily eaten and easily digested especially when you're tired. Whether you're a fire-watcher or a full-time warden, a long-distance traveller or just a weary worker on the last train home, you can rest assured that biscuits are a sure remedy for that painfully hollow feeling you know so well.

BISCUITS 'back up' effort

CVS-84

NATURE'S Restorative

THREE half wine glasses every day will give you new energy and strength and make you feel better and sleep better. Suitable for children or adults. Non-alcoholic.

from all chemists and stores, 5/3 or 3/3 per bottle. including purchase tax.

VIRONITA

(VYRO-NIGHT-A)

M. CASTLECROFT & Co. Ltd. Manufg. Chemists, Gosport.

War time restrictions and transport delays render supplies of Vironita difficult in some areas; but you can get what you want with patience. Vironita is so good that it is worth waiting for.

What
PRECISION
is to a Bofors Gun
HERCULES
Precision Engineering is to the **CYCLE** *of* **TO-DAY.**

The Hercules Cycle and Motor Co., Ltd. . . . Aston . . . Birmingham

---

This meal-time drink is a food as well

Your family's regular meal-time drink can be a good body-building, energy-giving food — Rowntree's Cocoa. It is nourishing and easily digestible, and even makes it easier to digest your other food.

ROWNTREE'S COCOA

makes every meal go further

Why Not

KEEP FIT, FRESH & YOUTHFUL

FEELING well, cheerful and youthful becomes a habit when you discover what Bile Beans can mean to you. These famous vegetable pills, taken each night, create that perfect "inner health" which is the foundation of fitness, good spirits and personal charm.

Bile Beans ensure regular daily elimination, give you a clear skin, tone you up, and keep you fresh, vital and youthful.

By Taking Nightly

BILE BEANS

Dispel* weary tired *feelings* —*with Phensic

Try two tablets of Phensic with a little water! This is a wonderful tonic to weariness. Instantly effective, quite harmless, and very valuable indeed for removing the cause of that "over-tiredness" which so often prevents deep restful sleep. Get some Phensic now.

Two sizes only: 1/4 and 3/3 inc. Pur. Tax.

Quickly! take some Phensic

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EXTRA SOFT

Max. Controlled Price 8½d. per roll.

We ask your indulgence should your Retailer be temporarily out of stock.

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